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ENGLISH TRANSLATION
OF
“THE BABU”

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

OF

“THE BABU”

(A BENGALI SOCIETY FARCE).

BY

BABU ĀMRITA LAL BOSE,

MANAGER, STAR THEATRE, CALCUTTA,

TRANSLATED INTO ENGLISH

BY

NIBARAN CHANDRA CHATTERJEE.

OFFG. SUPERINTENDENT, BOARD OF EXAMINERS,

WITH AN INTRODUCTION

BY

LIEUT.-COLONEL D. C. PHILLOTT, F.A.S.B.,

SECRETARY & MEMBER, BOARD OF EXAMINERS.

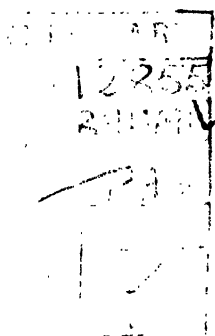
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TO
LIEUTENANT-COLONEL D. C. PHILLOTT,

I. A., F. A. S. B., F. C. U.,

SECRETARY & MEMBER, BOARD OF EXAMINERS, CALCUTTA,

•
WHO FIRST SUGGESTED TO THE TRANSLATOR

THE IDEA OF PUBLISHING THIS BOOK,

AND WHO IS DOING SO MUCH

IN THE CAUSE OF ORIENTAL LANGUAGES,

THIS TRANSLATION

IS

MOST RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBED

BY

HIS OBEDIENT AND GRATEFUL SERVANT,

NIBARAN CHANDRA CHATTERJEE,

OFFG. SUPERINTENDENT, BOARD OF EXAMINERS.

PREFACE.

In presenting this my first publication to the indulgence of the public, my most pleasant duty is to offer my heart-felt and sincere thanks to my respected patron, Lieut.-Colonel D. C. Phillott, who suggested to me the idea of translating this Bengali farce of the "Bābu," which is written in very idiomatic colloquial. The reason of his asking me to undertake this work is set forth in the Introduction so kindly written by him, and which, I believe, will be read by every body with great interest. Had he not helped me continuously in this work, it would never have been published.

The manuscript translation was finished in October 1910 when Colonel Phillott left for England on six months' leave. He hoped to see it printed before his return. But owing to some unavoidable circumstances, the manuscript was out of my possession for six months. I am glad that at last my translation has seen the light of day.

The Colonel Sahib has not only helped me by revising the whole translation, but also by seeing all the proofs through the press. I cannot sufficiently thank him for the trouble he has so gladly

taken in this publication. His wide knowledge of Hindi and other Oriental tongues has enabled him to readily grasp the ideas of a language of which he says he knows so little.

I am extremely grateful to the author, Bābu Amrita Lāl Bose, Manager and Proprietor of the Star Theatre, for his courtesy in permitting me to translate his popular farce.

I am also indebted to Mr. Harināth Dé, Librarian of the Imperial Library, for some of the foot-notes and for some valuable hints which have saved me from error.

CALCUTTA, }
June 1911. }

N. C. CHATTERJEE.

INTRODUCTION.

The "Bābu" was written about eighteen years ago by Bābu Amrita Lāl Bose, the actor manager of the Star Theatre, Calcutta, whose facile pen has produced numerous other dramatic works. The little play is still frequently performed and still draws large audiences, a fact which sufficiently proves, that, whatever may be the shortcomings of the Bengalis, lack of humour cannot be included in them.

It has not infrequently been said that the Bengali stage is seditious ; but Mr. Bose triumphantly points to the "Bābu" and his other works as a refutation of this accusation. He is a patriot, but not a patriot like Bābu Shashthī Krishna Vatavyāl, nor does he belong to that modern school which clamours that the time has come for Indians to rule themselves.

The author is an admirer of the late Rājā Rām Mohan Roy, the founder of the Brāhmo Samāj, and justly appreciates his labours. He most emphatically denies that it was his intention to hold the Brāhmos up to ridicule, or the Bābu class up to contempt. He did, however, wish to ridicule a certain type of canting Brāhmo, and also the spurious Europeanised Bengali of

which Bābu Shashthī Krishna Vatavyāl is hardly an exaggerated type. While admiring Western manners and education, he wished to point out that what suits one people does not necessarily suit another. It may be right for English ladies to go to dances and skip about with a strange man's arm round their waist, but, it is wrong for Bengali ladies, he urges, to go about the streets unattended. English culture is one thing, and English training for Bengali boys another. The school-boys in the second scene of Act II. are an illustration of his statement. This scene was written as a prophecy. The Bengali boy has indeed benefited in many ways by English education, but no one who knows Calcutta can say that the English educational system has proved an unquestioned success.

While I was searching for a suitable book as a help to the study of colloquial Bengali, some friend suggested the "Bābu." I consulted the author, who, with rare courtesy, had a special performance for my benefit. I can only regret that my knowledge of Bengali is not sufficient to make me a competent judge as to how far the play is suitable for the object in view, but students will at any rate have the advantage of reading a very amusing work and then of practising their ear when seeing it performed.

The translator has executed his task conscientiously, and in my opinion admirably. Most Indians consider it lessening to their dignity to consult any living authority, and hence it is that dictionaries compiled by Indians are confined to the knowledge that can be gathered by one man. The translator has, however, availed himself of all the living help he could obtain and has not merely trusted to the dictionary, and, for this departure from Indian custom, great credit is due to him. The allusions, as well as the plays upon words, in the original text, are considerable, and it has, of course, been found impossible to reproduce these. The English words that are interspersed in the text are indicated in the translation by inverted commas.

CALCUTTA,) D. C. PHILLOTT, LIEUT.-COLONEL,
July 1911.) Secretary, Board of Examiners.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.



MALE.

Shashthī Krishna Vatavyāl ...	A 'philanthropic' Bābu (and a <i>poscur</i>).
Phatikchānd Chakravartī ...	Shashthī's Brother-in-law.
As'aniprakās'	... A 'scientific' Bābu.
Sajanīkānta Chāki	... A Brāhmo Reformer.
Uncle Tinkari	
Bānchhārām Sādhukhān	... A religious hypocrite.
Dāmodar	... A Brāhmo follower of Sajanī.
Kandarpakānta	... A mufassal student (of E. Bengal).
Gobin Banerjee	... A simple old-fashioned clerk.
Bhajahari	... A village Headman.
Titurām Gāngulī	.. An opium-smoker.
Naderchānd	... Kandarpa's servant (from E. Bengal).
Bhāghat	... Phatik's Uriya servant.
Gurucharan	... A poor neighbour of Sajanī.
Krishna	} ... School-boys.
Ghanas'yām	
Chandra	
Beni	

An English sailor ; Several Bābus.

FEMALE.

Nīradā	... Shashthī's wife.
Kshamāsundarī	.. Bānchhārām's wife.
Dayitadalanī	... Sajani's wife.
S'īladā } Jnānadā }	... Neighbours of Shashthi.
Kāyet Thākurjī	
Ajimā	... Kandarpa's maternal grandmother.
S'rīmatī	... Shashthi's mother.
Saudhakirītīnī	... Daughter of Dayitadalanī.

Emancipated ladies.

BENEDICTORY STANZAS.

SCENE.—A GARDEN.

Vaishnava Women 'hymning' Bābūism.

Long live our jewels of young men,
They who are ever engrossed in the ecstatic
thoughts of their charmers' neat ankles !
Their skin is dark, like a purple plum ;
Their attitude and gestures are full of affectation ;
They ruin their health by gadding about.
Their eyes are protected by spectacles ;
Their hair is parted in a foppish slant ;
They adopt an affected tone in their speech ;
With what queer beards do they hide their contorted
faces.
They are garbed in English coats ;
Their mouths are full of wordy words ;
Their spirit lies in tall talk ;
When the time to act comes, they show a clear pair
of heels ;
All they do leads to self-destruction.
At one time they style themselves Bābū, at another
Mr. ;
Their father is styled 'Brother', their wife 'Sister,'
And in addressing people they ignore all differences
in relationship :
Their freakishness defies description.

When they don't die young, what endless innovations do they not set afoot,

I assure you, dear sisters, they will destroy all our time-honoured customs.

The *parda* will be removed ; our ladies will be made to dance the can-can (*khemtā*) and so acquire a notoriety ;

But, alas, only if the envious God of Death spares them a while.

—:o:—

ACT I

SCENE I.—PHATIK'S PARLOUR.

Phatik Chānd and Bhajahari.

Phatik—Who ever put this mad notion into your head ? Famine to be removed by writing to newspapers ! My brother-in-law Shashthī is a real scoundrel : do you think he'll do what I'll ask ? Rather he'll give himself airs.

Bhaja.—Do, Sir, speak to him first, and then I'll also humbly entreat him. Shashthī Bābu is your very near relation, he's your sister's husband. He's bound to comply with your request.

Phatik—Why, he wouldn't listen to his own father ; I'm only a relation by marriage.

(Enter Bhāgbat, Phatik's servant.)

Well Bhāgbat ! what's the news ?

Bhāg.—(In Uriya) Jamāi Bābu is come ; he gave me this chit, and said, give it to the Barā Bābu.

Phatik—What chit ? Oh ! it's a 'ticket.'

Bhāg.—(In Uriya) Yes, *tikis* ; what *tikis* how can I know, master ? Read and see. *(Gives card.)*

Phatik—(Takes card and reads aloud) "Mr. S. K. Bhyātābhyāl." Damn him ! I see Shashthī

Krishna Vatavyāl has become S. K. Bhyātābhyāl so that the sahibs may think that the Bābu is a grandson of some Andrew Pedro.¹ (To Bhāgbat) Well, ask him to come up. Why is he waiting below?

Bhāg.—(In Uriya) I said to him, you are the son-in-law of the family and an inmate; go up without any hesitation. On this he said some gibberish in English which I could not understand. Then he said, "Just give this chit or I shall be out of *āntikānti* or something of the sort."

Phatik—Go down, go down, and ask him to come up.

(Exit Bhāgbat.)

What on earth is *āntikānti*? Oh! I see, 'etiquette.' Now look at the formality of this d—d brother-in-law of mine. He comes to the house of his own father-in-law and stands on ceremony and sends up a card. You see, Bhajahari, it is *this* unmannerly monkey you have come to petition on behalf of your famine-stricken village.

Bhaja.—Of course he often visits Englishmen and so his manners have become English. Any way I am in luck; I wonder whose face I saw to-day before starting. I'm glad this has saved

1. A contemptuous term for a Eurasian; one baptised by a Scotch or Jesuit Missionary.

you the trouble of going to him ; the gentleman has come himself.

(*Enter Shashthī.*)

Shashthī—Hálloo, hálloo, hálloo !

Phatik—Huā, huā, huā ! [imitating a jackal.]

Shashthī—*God*¹ morning, Mr. Phatikchānd.

Phatik—I see it is so, Mr. Bhyātābhyāl.

Shashthī—(Offering to shake hands) Ha' d' ye do ?

Phatik—(Calling as in the game of prisoners' base) *Chhel digle digle digle*—

Shashthī—“By all the devils,” what's this ?

Phatik—*Hādu du-du* is rough and so I was suggesting prisoners' base instead. By the way, you've come in the nick of time or I should have had to run over to your house.

Shashthī—“In—deed !”

Phatik—(Drawling) *Māi—r—i—i* ! Some one has put a stupid notion into the head of this country boor that you are a power in the land now, that you are everything with the Government. The crops have failed in this man's village, and he thinks that a few lines in your Newspaper and a speech or two from you, will either make the rice grow, or else induce the Company Bahadur to open kitchens for the

1. ‘Smart’ Bengalis trying to speak like Englishmen clip their words and speak affectedly in a haw-haw manner.

free distribution of food. He has urged me to tell you this, so do what you think fit.

Shashthī—"Now look here, Mr. Phatik, I am out "on a social mission, I can't attend to political "affairs just now."

Phatik—Say something or other to him and relieve me from his importunity.

Shashthī—"Oh no, tell him to see me between two "and three in the afternoon on Friday. He "must send a memorial signed by all the res- "pectable ryots to our Association. But has "he got funds sufficient to go on with the "preliminaries?"

Phatik—(Making faces and imitating the English accent) That is more than I know. (Again makes faces and speaks gibberish.)

Shashthī—"Don't you be joking in these serious "matters. What do you mean?"

Phatik—(Making faces and speaking gibberish)
*Ghini ghini ghin, luk lukā luk, puk pukā puk
pukut pukut pāk.*

Shashthī—Drunk at this hour? What are you jabbering?

Phatik—Now come to your senses, my dear fellow. Speak in your own language and then I'll answer you. Why these outlandish manners? You've come to your father-in-law's house and sent up a card. We are both of us Bengalis

and near relations as well. Can't I understand my father's language? Well, you are better at English than I am, and so you show off your English; but I am, you see, better at Chinese.

Bhaja.—Sirs, please leave your joking till afterwards. Your humble servant has come to you in great trouble; kindly listen to his petition.

Shashthī—[Speaking bad Bengali like an Englishman] What is your application? What is the name of your village?

Bhaja.—If it please you, Sir, it is Kāngāldāngā in the vicinity of Burdwan. There have been no crops for two years; we're all dying of starvation. I've heard that your pen is a force and your speech compelling. If you would only take compassion on the poor.

Shashthī—[Speaking as before] How much money has been raised as subscription?

Bhaja.—So please you, Sir, we've no food for our bellies; who could subscribe?

Shashthī—[In English] "Then go away, go away, don't come bothering me here."

Phatik—(Making faces and jabbering) *Kān kunā kun kichir michir kāni.*

Shashthī—Stop that, Phatik. [To Bhajahari] None of your villagers subscribes to my paper; I can't write for the village "for nothing."

Bhaja.—Sir, if you saw the piteous condition of

the village with your own eyes, you'd certainly have pity. Where's the man there who can spend money? Only poor cultivators live there. The crops have failed for two years in succession, and set aside their own stomachs they cannot get food every day to put in the mouths of their children. Your reputation has drawn me here. Your Newspaper has a great position; even the Viceroy reads it. If you write a strong line or two about the condition of our village, Government may give us some relief and you will save many souls.

Shashthī—[In ordinary Bengali] It can't be done. Your village must subscribe to at least ten copies of my paper. The annual subscription—paid in advance—plus postage, is rupees one hundred only. You must also subscribe to a dozen of my photographs, price twenty-four rupees. You can have them framed at your own cost. That's settled. You say your village is poor, so, if you can't afford more, subscribe at least fifty rupees for the 'Deliverance of India Fund'—but no, as orthodox Hindus you will perhaps object to give sums ending in a naught—so we'll call it fifty-one. For this I may write a para in the local—not, of course, in the editorial—column.

'Bhaja.—One hundred and seventy-five rupees!

Why, Sir, if we sold all the utensils of our houses, we couldn't raise a quaffer of this sum. And who of the village could read your English paper? No one in the village knows English—they are just poor villagers.

Shashthī—What! Not know English? Then whether such a village exists or not, it's of no consequence whatever. I can't do anything for that village. Well, you must start by raising substantial subscriptions, by selling your bullocks and ploughs, to give me a fund to open a school there. Let them learn English first; then civilised persons like ourselves can have pity, can have "sympathy" for them.

Phatik—That is to say that unless and until the race of ploughmen becomes extinct nothing can be done.

Shashthī—No, and to tell the truth, if they all perish the better for the country. The population has increased too much. According to Malthus, famine or pestilence is necessary to decrease population, and it is better that such ignorant villagers should perish than educated and refined persons.

Phatik—It is a pity that such uneducated unrefined brutes don't want to die. Now, pay up something in cash to this gentleman; you've learnt a bit of practical wisdom.

Bhaja.—Sir, I had great hopes, when I came, to take you back with me and show you the state of our village. If you see it with your own eyes, your heart must melt with pity.

Shashthī—I *may* go—

Phatik—Shall I lend you my gun to shoot one or two of those queer villagers ? You'll kill two birds with one stone—check the famine and have a day's shooting at the same time.

Shashthī—[In English] "Stop a moment."

Phatik—(Makes faces, etc.) *Ghatāghat ghat foment.*

Shashthī—Look here ; provided my expenses are paid, I am prepared to go.

Bhaja.—To be sure, Sir, the expenses will be paid ; I didn't mean that you should have the trouble of going and spending money out of your own pocket. I can pay for an intermediate return. I scraped together enough for this before I started.

Shashthī—I see you live in a very uncivilised spot. You are quite ignorant of all the necessities of patriotism. You want me to visit your village to remove the famine ; but if I travel intermediate, who will know me ? Arrange for a return first and—I'll dine at Kellner's— ; I'll give some lectures in the village, so you must take a Eurasian reporter from here. He must have a second class return—and of course his

fec. Then too my departure must be reported by telegram to our Branch Associations in Rajshahi, Dacca, Jessore, Patna, Benares, Bombay, Madras, Ceylon, London, etc., etc. You must engage a *pālākī* to convey me from the station to the village. You must have a triumphal arch of *deodār*, surmounted by flags put up at the entrance of the village. There must be illuminations and the band,¹ and if you can arrange for an amateur concert party from Calcutta, well so much the better.

Phatik—And look here, also add to the entertainment, a coy young bride, so that the gentleman may return with another new wife, and this will lead to the famine being removed from your village.

Bhaja.—I see, Sir, there's nothing to be hoped for, from you. If the villagers could afford so much money, they wouldn't be dying of starvation.

Shashthī—Just tell your zemindar to pay. Who is your zemindar?

Bhaja.—Sir, Sītānāth Singi, but he is not well off now. He has lost nearly all his money in a family partition suit. It's enough that he doesn't

1. *Nahabat*, i. e., music of pipes and drums played by four persons usually from the top of triumphal arches and over gate-ways.

oppress us for his rents. How can we expect him to feed us as well from his own pocket ?

Shashthī—Sītānāth Singi is your zemindar ? “Oh ! that scoundrel !” There is no more wicked and tyrannical zemindar to be found anywhere. He used to subscribe to my paper but he has stopped. I sent some one to collect subscriptions for the India Deliverance Fund and he only subscribed fifty rupees, but all went in the travelling expenses—and the commission of the collector. “I owe him a grudge.” Why didn’t you tell me this before ? Very well, now I’ll do what you want for nothing, but you must stop paying rents to him altogether. If you agree to this, then as I have some Midnapore Fund subscriptions deposited with me, I’ll write for your village and take the cost out of *that* fund. Capital ! now I have found a “plea :” I shall state that the ryots are dying through the oppression of the zemindar.

Bhaja.—But, Sir, there is no oppression from the zemindar—

Shashthī—Don’t trouble ‘about that, I’ll make it out ; I’ll make out the oppression.

Phatik—Ah ! see the power of his Pen. What force ! If one learns English well, one can turn “yes” into “no.” This is what they call “diplomacy.”

Shashthī—Now go ; come and see me again this evening. I must first settle^e what day my birthday dinner is to be, and then I'll fix up a date for you and start.

Bhaja. —So with your permission, Sir, I take my leave, so please accept my *Pranām*.

Shashthī—*Pranām* ! ha—ha—ha ! What shall I answer, Phatikchānd ?

Phatik—"Jayostu : " but that word will stick in your damned mouth. Raise your right leg and bless him like a Baidyanāth bull. '

(*Exit Bhajahari.*)

Shashthī—Phatik ! you see what a worry it is to be a "public man." I am worn out by working for others.

Phatik—You are not bound by oath to do so ; give it up. One who wishes to be a public man must put up with this trouble. But I suppose you can't give it up ; isn't that so ? But let us be frank in private ; the work is not quite unprofitable ?

(*Enter Titurām Thākur, an opium-smoker.*)

Titu.—Here you are, Bat and Ball Bābu—at last I've caught you. It is impossible to see you in your own home without a card. I was lucky,

1. These are sacred freak bulls of Baidyanāth, that are taught to raise the right leg when alms are given.

passing this way, to see your *tyātyām tyām* at the door.

Phatik—Goodness gracious, who is this man ! Is he another of your patriots ? *What* Bābu did you say ?

Titu.—Bat and Ball Bābu.

Phatik—Capital ! Capital ! You have changed your father's Vativyāl into Bhyātābhyāl and this disciple¹ of yours it seems has made it into Bat and Ball.

Shashthī—Well, you are looking for *me* ? What do you want ?

Titu.—What should I want ? Such a question one would expect in this "Black Age !" When you wanted to be a *Kāshmirī* (commissioner) of the "Corporation Office," you coaxed me to canvass for you. As you are my neighbour, I made the head of our opium-den give his *ghonts* (votes) for you. *Then* you'd have promised me the moon ; but that was all moon-shine.

Shashthī—A-ah ! let me see, don't you live in our neighbourhood ?

Titu.—Really, my dear fellow ? We Gangulis cleared the forest and settled here. *You* are a lodger of yesterday ; and *you, you* tell me

1. *Talpidār*, lit. a bundle-carrier. Disciples carry the bundles of their spiritual teachers.

that I live in *your* neighbourhood? Why, some day you'll say that the house of Akrūr Datta himself lies under the caves of your residence. When you were canvassing for the *Kāshmirī ghonts* [commissionership vote], you used to call on Titurām a dozen times a day; you wore a hole in his door step. You, who had not the decency to nod to even your family priest, you wore out the soles of my feet taking the dust off them.¹ Now with your advice to the Viceroy you are going to take our very lives by trying to clear opium out of the country. I hear you have sworn by all that is sacred (*lit.* on copper, the basil and the sacred Ganges)² and given evidence that opium is ruining the country, stating that opium-smokers are habitual thieves. When did I ever get into your dear lady's room? You've sworn falsely on Ganges water. Are'nt you afraid of becoming a leper?

Shashthī—Ah, yes, you're talking about that Opium Commission? But—I fear you don't understand. Eminent men in England have

1. To put on your head.

2. Hindus when taking an oath first touch these three things.

3. The allusion is to the well-known Bengali story of "Bidyā Sundar."

come to the conclusion that opium is the root of all the evil in our country and that its cultivation should be stopped.

Titu.—The sahibs of England are pulling the strings and you, my dear Bat and Ball, aren't you dancing? You don't know these cat-eyed people. Did you try to find out what was really at the bottom of the matter? Their 'cousins and their aunts' own breweries and stills; by abolishing our royal drug they want to create armies of drunkards. My dear fellow, have a care, don't be led away by them. Man can't live without some intoxicant. Have you noticed that even little children when playing, turn round and round to get giddy? Wealthy Durgānāth Bābu has a *maina* and as soon as it strikes five in the afternoon it begins to yawn for its opium. Its daily dose is the size of a pigeon's pea. If you abolish this royal drug of ours, you'll fill the country with devilish drunkenness—you'll have disturbances, uproars, murder, bloodshed, etc. Is not our pacific intoxicating drug better than all this? We are a harmless people; why are we oppressed? When we tread we do so softly lest Mother Earth be hurt.

Shashthī—Opium-eating is bad indeed. I may not succeed in abolishing that, but what do you

say to opium-smoking ? Is there anything more abominable !

Titu.—Well, I see you have passed your examinations merely to get silver plate¹ at your wedding and that you have learnt no wisdom at all. Take for instance tobacco. Does a man throw it down his throat or enjoy its smoke through a pipe ? We, too, merely enjoy the “refined gas” of opium. Now come, let us go one morning to the Lalbazar Police Court. Now, how many drunkards are brought up and how many opium-smokers fined ? Who has ever been ruined by opium ? Give me one example. I can give you a long list of Croesuses ruined by wine ; their wives and children driven by starvation are begging from door to door. Seeing us somewhat emaciated you jeer at us, but have you any record of the number of years’ intoxication it requires to produce this thinness ? Wine doesn’t let people reach this stage. It kills them while still stout and well. These few bones of mine that you see, what an age they will last ! They are hardened and cured by smoke like *beur² lāthīs*. But you by

1. If a boy passes high examinations, his father will demand from the bride’s parents many things as plenishing.

2. A kind of male bamboo from which *lāthīs* are usually made.

drinking the poison of the bottles become swollen like Chinese lanterns, and can't bear the fillip of a finger without collapsing.

Shashthī—Are you aware of the number of men and women that commit suicide by eating opium ?

Titu.—And for this should opium be abolished ? Why, some men die by hanging themselves and some escape from worldly trouble by drowning themselves. Then along with the poppy you should abolish jute too, so that ropes may not be made for hanging. Abolish too the potters' profession lest earthen *gharās*¹ should be made to assist drowners, and pump too Mother Ganges dry.

Shashthī—Go away, go away.

Titu.—I'm going, my dear fellow, but look here, my dear man, just listen to a piece of advice from an old-fashioned man. Seeing that you are fools, they have tricked you by sending a Commission to abolish opium ; now you too combine and send a Commission to London to abolish drink. Then let us see who can go on the longest without his own particular intoxicant. Above all, stop the importation of foreign liquors. If the owners of *our* opium-

1. Suicides sometimes drown themselves by weighting their necks with *gharās*.

dens must go smash, let us make the owners of *their* stills shut up shop. This is the arrangement I propose. As for our friends the Chinese, they are smart, you bet. If the British export of opium to China is stopped, they'll cultivate the drug in their own country, rather than ruin their health by taking to drink as these English would have them do. Take my word for it.

Shashthī—Go away, go away.

Titu.—I'm going, my dear fellow. Could a "gentleman" stay longer in such company as yours?

(*Exit.*)

Shashthī—Look here, Phatik, just look at the unappreciativeness of our countrymen. Some large-hearted Englishmen, taking pity on our distressful country, are trying to abolish opium, but no sooner do I and my party assist them in their noble work than a number of people in this country begin their attacks on us. Now do you fancy that that opium-smoker came here of his *own* accord? There are some big bugs behind him, pulling the strings. What a gross "falacious argument" (they bring forward), that if opium is abolished drink will be wide spread, and that therefore opium should not be abolished. "How ridiculous!" A lesser evil

should not be rooted out because it'll lead to the increase of a greater one !

Phatik—Look here, up to the present I've merely been a listener and not spoken a word. But let me tell you that whenever I hear, that people in England have grown philanthropic towards us, I can't help feeling nervous. Once some mill-owners in England had a sudden fit of kindness to our mill-hands here. The natural result of their kindness was that the good creatures are enjoying a loss of income. Opium has again roused English compassion. The expenses of this commission are defrayed by taxes paid by *us*—this is of course as it should be—that's quite clear. Besides I've heard that those statements of that fellow are not untrue. In England several great men own breweries themselves, so when these people show a fit of compassion, well it seems odd. As regards what you call "ridiculous" in the argument about the abolition of opium, I do not follow you. In my poor opinion if a greater evil can be prevented by allowing a lesser to continue, the lesser *should* continue. That the evils of drink are greater than those of opium, there is no doubt.

Shashthi—Put this aside for the present. I'll argue with you about it some other day.

Listen now to what I came to tell you. Tomorrow morning your sister must return home. I'll send the tum-tum for her.

Phatik—Do you mean Nīradā to drive in the tum-tum?

Shashthī—"She ought to."

Phatik—I was going to suggest that instead of sending your rāmshackle *tamtam*, you'd better send a balloon. You're the High Priest of the "India Deliverance Association" and it would suit your high position if your wife went to you soaring in the air.

Shashthī—I'm glad that this time your jest is scientific. If she can't drive in a tum-tum, I'll send the office *gārī* for her. I don't like her going in a *palkī*, for the dirty Uriya bearers mutter indecencies as they bear their burden.

Phatik—But why all this hurry?

Shashthī—Well! to-morrow there will be a "Conversazione" at my house and many "ladies and gentlemen" are coming; there will be political and social discussions.

Phatik—But Nīradā doesn't understand such discussions. Spare her this infliction.

Shashthī—"Oh Heavens! that's impossible;" she *must* be there; she's the "hostess."

Phatik—Damn your hostess, or ghostess or whatever you call it.

The husband now alive clasps our hand,
 And solemnly adjures us, "When I kick the bucket
 Bring home a new man, mind you do, immaculate
 spouse, don't forget, don't forget¹."
 (*Exit all.*)

SCENE III.—THE COMMON ROOM OF THE
 BRAHMO SAMAJ.

*Sajanīkānta*² (a reformer) and *Aśaniprakāś*²
 (a scientist).

Aśani—I tell you this, as for the Hindus making
 red, blue, and green idols with ten hands and
 five heads, and calling them likenesses of God—
 I don't admit this at all; but still what you
 state that He is without form is equally wrong.

Sajanī—Then, Aśani Bābu, do you mean to say
 that God *has* form?

Aśani—"Certainly," otherwise is science false—
 "and that's impossible." You know that even
 the air has some "form." From the daily
 improvement in microscopes there is a hope
 that soon they will reach such a pitch of
 perfection that if there is a God at all we shall
 be able to spy Him easily. But I am not sure

1. The Brahmos encourage widow marriage and are
 accused of being governed by their wives most of whom are
 graduates.

2. There is a play in these coined names.

whether this would mean anything except the glorification of science. You ought to be ashamed, Sajanī Bābu, that in this scientific age an educated man like *you* should call God a wonderful object.

Sajanī—But you know, Aśani Bābu, when He has succeeded in creating two beings like us, we must admit the wonder of His works.

Aśani—That's it ; by saying Creator, Creator, you've raised Him to a pinnacle. I don't admit that the world has been *created* by anybody. By "physical change" all things are being evolved. But granting that some one *has* created it, does it mean much? He whom you call God must have read a little more science than I have and that's all : I don't see much difference between Him and me, except in this. If I could but get "half an ounce of protoplasm," I too could make a creation on the spot.

(Enter Brother¹ Dāmodar.)

Dāmo.—Brother Sajanīkānta, brother Sajanīkānta. I give thee good news ; an epistle from brother Gobardhan hath reached us—the Santals by hosts are embracing our religion of love.

1. Brahmos address each other as Brother and Sister. As this leads to a confusion in relationships, Hindus ridicule the terms.

Sajanī.—Is that so? is that so? Whose letter did you say? Brother Gobardhan? which Gobardhan?

Dāmo.—The husband,¹ that is, *brother* of sister Taranginī Māschatak.²

Sajanī—Capital, capital! Bravo, bravo, sister Taranginī! Brother Padmalochan starts for Nārājol to night?

Dāmo.—No; he cannot. Hearing the news of his departure, sister Anangamanjarī Karmakār hath been shedding ceaseless tears of love. Lately, on assumption of second widowhood, the sister went to take up her abode in "Ghentu Cottage."³ She is so overcome by the pangs of her widowhood that she cannot even exert herself to take her youngest babe in her lap. Her only consolation is derived from the admonitions and ministrations of brother Padmalochan.⁴

1. It is a rule of the Brahmo Samāj people to address each other as brothers and sisters.

2. *Lit.* the Flowing Bat. Brahmos, having discarded Hindu mythology, give their children high-sounding and ridiculous names.

3. This might be rendered Nettle Cottage. There is a covert allusion to a certain cottage in Calcutta, once the residence of a Brahmo teacher who consoled young and afflicted widows.

4. *Lit.* Lotus-eyed.

Aśani—If there is any urgent necessity, send Padmalochan Bābu where you wanted to send him and don't be concerned about her pangs of widowhood. I'll put that right.

Dāmo.—Who ? Aśani Bābu ? *You* ? Are *you* willing to join our community ? Are *you* ready to marry a sister ?

Aśani—No, no, I won't marry a sister. Set aside sisters, I won't marry any human being. If I can produce children by means of electricity, I'll produce them ; otherwise farewell to progeny. But by science I can remove the pangs of widowhood.

Sajani—By science ! How ?

Aśani—Why, if surgeons perform big operations without the patients even knowing it, can't such a simple thing as the pangs of widowhood be relieved ? I think I can make such a galvanic battery that if the patient holds its poles in her hands, the pangs of widowhood will at once be numbed.

Sajani & Dāmo.—(Laughing) Ha-ha-ha-ha.

Sajani—(Putting out his tongue¹ and biting it) What ! oh what have I done ? Aśani Bābu, though we have different professions—you your science and I my religion—still remember that

1. A sign of repentance.

we have known each other for many years, and so I earnestly entreat you not to tell any one.¹

Aśani—Tell what? You've done nothing;—

Sajanī—Done nothing? I've committed a great sin. Both of us have been guilty of an indecency—laughter.

Aśani—Well, what's the harm in laughing? There's a kind of gas called "laughing gas" which makes any one who smells it burst out laughing.

Sajanī—No, no, Aśani Bābu; you've only read science; you know nothing of religion. Laughing is an offence against decency; this world is a vale of tears; here our duty is to weep, ever.

Aśani—You ask me not to tell; very well, I won't.

Dāmo.—Now, who will go to Nārājol? I can't think of any one.

Sajanī—Brother, I see *you*'ll have to go.

Dāmo.—*I*!

Sajanī—Yes, we must by hook or by crook get as many brothers and sisters to join our community as possible, and that soon. Shashthī Vatavyāl's party is getting larger and larger. We who have abandoned our parents, lost our caste, enticed away so many widows and got them married, shall we not be able to effect

1. The "brothers" consider laughing offensive.

the deliverance of India? Shall Shashthī Vatavyāl and his disciples make a name for themselves by delivering India merely by the glamour of their speechifying? Surely this is more than we can stand. If India is to be delivered, let it be delivered by us, otherwise let India go to the dogs.

Dāmo.—Glory¹ to India, all Glory to India.

Sajanī—"Glory to Truth," "Love is the best religion," O lord of the soul! pray grant us strength and render Shashthī Vatavyāl's attempt to deliver India abortive.

Aśani—Amen. If India is to be delivered, it won't be by delivering lectures and remarrying widows. If ever we are to attain autonomy, rest assured it will be by the help of science alone. Near Kalāgechia an electric wire should be run into the Ganges capable of sinking all English ships as soon as they come within its range. You gentlemen haven't the least "perseverance:" have patience for a few days. Cannot you see that the marvels effected by electricity are increasing every day? We have telephones now; phonographs; by electricity steamers are propelled and trams made to run. Mark my words, if I live—and I'm bound to

1. "Glory" is one of the cant phrases of the Brahmo Samāj.

as I eat a quantity of electricity twice a day—
I will by the force of electricity abolish the
caste system, effect the remarriage of widows,
teach women to ride horses, establish a Parlia-
ment in India, and do many other deeds
besides.

Dāmo.—If you can, well so much the better. But
until that happens we mustn't remain idle.

Sajanī—Never; therefore, I say, brother, you must
go to Nārājol. Why, brother, does not your
heart bleed for the people of Nārājol¹?

Dāmo.—Not bleed for them? Oh! if I could
but tear open this heart and show it to you—

Aśanī—You *shall* show it to us, you *shall*. I have
an instrument here with me to tear it open.

Dāmo.—Good Heavens, no, no; Aśanī Bābu, don't
obstruct the flow of my emotion. Could I but
open and show it, you would see that my heart
is cracking for our brothers of Nārājol. To say
nothing of *doing*, I would, if necessary, sacri-
fice my life even to procure deliverance for,
and bestow love on, the brothers and sisters of
that place, but—(*breaks off*.)

Sajanī—But what?

Dāmo.—Who will conduct the case I have just in-
stituted before the High Court, to dispossess

1. Prophetic of the sedition in that place.

my younger brother of his share in our house, that idolator 'brother of mine ?

SajanI—Brother, why be anxious about that ? You *shall* fight against your idolator brother. Who is there amongst us so faint-hearted that he would not assist you in this noble war ? I myself will consult with pleader brother Visvaranjan¹ ; I myself will see to every thing. If a stranger can't be procured, I myself will act as witness,—and two days' penitence will absolve me. You need not be in the least concerned about the matter.

Dāmo.—Bravo, brother, bravo ! I admire your religious spirit.² I admire your love for your human brothers ! Had not that wretched brother of mine agreed to support my wife, she would have had to follow my steps when I threw my sacred thread into the sink and left home for ever to join the Community. By the encouragement of that wicked brother of mine she had the impertinence to stay in our house and remain an idolatrous Hindu. A brother who prevented my own wife from becoming our sister, ought I to look on his face again ? Arrange matters in such a way that

1. *Lit.* Complaisant to the World. A hit at certain barrister brothers.

2. *i. e.* in consenting to the penitence.

even if the pleader's fees have to be paid by selling the house let it be done, But let the court bailiffs come and drag him and his family out, and deprive them of shelter. Now I am going to sacrifice my life for the brothers of Nārājol.

(*Exit.*)

Aśani—What sort of a muddle is this, Sajanī Bābu? His own brother is to be sued and heartlessly driven from house and home, while he lays down his life for some boors in a small benighted place called Nārājol? This is preposterous. What sort of a religion is this of yours? It is quite outside all rules of mathematics. Now, if the men of Nārājol are your brothers, and if a brother by the same father and mother is also your brother, then since "Things which are equal to the same thing are equal to one another," both these brothers stand in the same relation to you.

Sajanī—You don't understand. Philanthropy is a crowning virtue. One's wealth, one's heart, one's soul, all, all should be sacrificed for the good of others. But to do things for one's *own* people is not desirable. Helping one's kith and kin does not constitute a virtue. As there has been no rain in Nārājol for nearly three years, there's great scarcity; people are starving. Now when their bellies are aching with hunger, if

the food of love be ministered to their souls
they will dance with joy¹ ?

Aśani—Ah! so there has been no rain. Why
didn't you say so at first? The remedy is
simple. It's quite easy to manufacture rain
artificially.

Sajanī—Oh yes, I remember having read in news-
papers that with something like dynamite or a
hydrogen-gas balloon, experiments are now
being conducted to produce artificial rain.

Aśani—Yes, but that's very expensive. The poor
people of Nārājol won't be able to afford it.
There's a simpler method that doesn't cost a
pice. If you meet Dāmodar Bābu before he
starts, tell him, or else write to him, to set fire
to all the houses in the village when he reaches.
The roofs are of thatch, they'll ignite in an
instant.

12255.

Sajanī—(Suppressing laughter) Be careful, Aśani
Bābu; don't talk like that a second time or I
may give way to the indecency of laughter.

Aśani—No, no, you don't understand. I've got
proof of what I say. You've heard of Chicago
in America, I presume? Only the other day
a great exhibition was held there. Let
Nārājol be set on fire and you'll see that when

The Brahmos are accused of talking high gibberish.

the villages are burnt, rain will fall and the scarcity will disappear.

(Enter Uncle Tinkari and Gurucharan.)

Tin.—Well, my dear fellow, you're always busy burning¹ ; you have burnt us all to the flesh and bones. Now whose house are you going to burn ?

Sajanī—Tinkari Bābu, whom I haven't seen for ages ? Well, what brings you here ?

Tin.—Well, my dear fellow, dire necessity. Who on earth would come to see people like you for mere pleasure ? This man has heard from some one that I am acquainted with you and so he has pressed me to come with him. Well Gurucharan, tell these gentlemen what you want. [Pointing to Sajanī Bābu.] This is Sajanīkanta Bābu—"President," and I know not what more.

Guru.—Good morning, Sir, I've come to you in great trouble.

Sajanī—(Slowly and emphatically) I-n—t-r-o-u-b-l-e—h-a-v-e—p-a-t-i-e-n-c-e.

Tin.—He's already had it. Now just listen to what he's come to tell you.

Guru.—Sir, I'm a poor man and your dependent. My house is at the back of the out-building

1. An idiom.

where your ladies sing and play. My mother has died in my house ; for I could not afford to transport her to die on the bank of the Ganges. There are only my wife, my sister and myself to carry the dead body to the burning ghat. To carry it by the public road is a long detour. If you will give us permission to bear it across that waste land of yours, it would be a short cut and you would greatly oblige us.

Sajanī—But why come to me first? You should have applied to our “Assistant Secretary.”

Tin.—There has been no breach of formality. We’ve been all round the place hunting since last night. We went to the “Assistant” who sent us to the “Secretary.” We found him sitting with his eyes closed in religious meditation¹ and had to stand for half an hour till he opened them. He sent us to your “Vice” and the Vice has sent us to you. Please give us some answer.

Sajanī—Well, to-day is Sunday and office is closed ; nothing can be done to-day. Come and remind me to-morrow between ten and eleven. On Friday there is a “meeting” of the “Sub Committee”, and I’ll “present” your “application.” If you have a majority, a

1. A Brahmo custom.

"general meeting" may be called. It won't take long to assemble—less than a fortnight—and you must find out what "resolution" is "passed."

Tin.—(To Gurucharan) He's right ; put it off for another two or three days and then the thirty¹ days will be complete, and so you will be able to burn the body and perform the *srādh* ceremony at the same time. See Gurucharan, how conveniently the gentleman has settled the matter for you ; you'll have no need to go to, and return from, the Ganges *twice*. Look here, Sajanikānta, you may have forsaken the faith of your ancestors, but that's no reason for becoming a fool. The question is about the dead body to be carried over your land ; can't you give a plain answer without all this fuss about a "meeting" and "resolution," etc. ?

SajanI—Whatever is laid down in the "procedure" should it not be strictly "observed ?"

Tin.—Don't you really understand that a dead body two or three weeks old must rot and be offensive ?

Aśani—But why should it rot ? Buy a bottle of my "magnetic" oil and apply it carefully and you'll preserve the corpse intact for five years.

1. The body is first burnt, and, for Sudras, thirty days after death, the *srādh* ceremony has to be performed.

The price of a bottle is one rupee twelve annas, and a red and blue pencil is given away with it.

Tin.—I see you don't forget the shop ; you don't miss an opportunity of advertising your goods. Put aside all this, Sajanīkānta, what answer do you give ?

Sajanī—I've already given it.

Tin.—Remember we have known each other long. Now of course you've become a "brother," but you used once to call me your "uncle." For a time too my own brain went wrong : sitting with you in the meeting-room I too closed my eyes and burst into tears. Grant my request ; give him leave to carry the body over your land.

Sajanī—Holy Rāma !—I mean formless God, formless God.¹ Just now I said "no" ; can I now say "yes" ? that'd be speaking a lie.

Tin.—Well, Gurucharan, didn't I tell you at the very outset that you would merely cause inconvenience to yourself and me ? He's a queer creature this ; there's nothing human about him. Go ; you're wasting time for nothing. Bear the body round the long way, bear it slowly, resting now and then.

Guru.—Very well, Sir, I will do as you say ; what

1. He checks himself for having used an idolatrous term.

else can I do? I had heard a great deal about the philanthropy of these gentlemen.

(Exit.)

Sajanī —Tinkari Bābu, why don't you come to see us now?

Tin.—The reason is I am afraid of turning philanthropic like you: I am a man of sanguine temperament: philanthropy won't agree with a temperament like mine.

Sajanī —Ought a person like you to relapse into Hinduism in your old age?

Tin.—Let me explain. As the day of death draws nearer and nearer, hypocrisy disappears. Seeing that I have to present myself before my Maker at no distant date, I must be sincere with myself and take his name in earnest. You are all still young and so can still amuse yourselves for a short time by playing at religious reform. But the greyer your hair turns the less flighty will you become, and then your only refuge will be Hari and Kālī.

Aśani—You can prevent your hair turning grey. Wear a "negative" ring, and there'll be no fear of the hair turning grey.

Sajanī —I've no objection to taking the names of Hari and Kālī but that doesn't mean that I should become a Hindu. See, by the force

of love our hearts have become generous and charitable and there is no uncleanness in our souls ; and hence I surely know that every Hindu is a liar, a trickster, an oppressor and tormentor of women. All Hindus will go to hell.

Tin.—Bravo ! What a pitch of religious fervour !

You have made your heart charitable indeed !

Sajanī—By this time I could have turned the hearts of all men, and made them as charitable as myself ; but backsliders like you relapsing into Hinduism have done us incalculable harm. Take for instance the “graduates and undergraduates” who should have joined us at once ; they still offer funeral cakes of rice and sesamum to their parents’ shades and form associations for singing hymns to Krishna.

Tin.—Tell me, my dear fellow ; supposing you to be ruler of this empire for one day—you would arrest and kill them all,—is that your meaning ?

Sajanī—“Glory to Truth !” There is no doubt of that. We had great hopes of that fellow Baradā¹ ; he is possessed of much eloquence and great physical strength which he could use on occasion but he too has deserted us and collected some college students who wear a

1. This is not the real name.

red-ochred garment and wander about shouting
Hari bol Hari bol. .

Tin.—My dear fellow, don't worry about him. Baradā has thrown the whole lot of you into shade. You are only occasionally in spiritual communion with Chaitanya, Moses, and St. John; but Baradā and his party have themselves become 'Saints and Prophets. Baradā has become Chaitanya; Gupē, the son of Madhu the brazier, Nitāi; and Nokro the weaver, Advaita; and others of his great party have assumed similar robes. You people despise the rest of humanity looking on it as a cypher; *these* fellows with their red-ochre robes and English speeches humbug the world to some purpose. They're perfectly happy, they do no work and live on the fat of the land.

(*Enter Saudhakirītinī*,¹ *daughter of Dayitadalanī*² *by her first husband and step-daughter of Sajani.*)

Saudha.—Junior Father, Junior Father,—

Tin.—Good God! what's a junior father? Have you people all got several fathers, senior, junior, etc.?

1. *Lit.* Crowned with White Palaces, an epithet of the capital of Lankā.—*Michael Datta's Epic "The Fall of Meghnāth."*

2. *Lit.* Husband-trampler.

Sajanī—No, she's only calling *me*. She was born in the days of the first spouse of my 'mistress' and so she calls me Junior Father.

Tin.—A daughter of whom did you say?

Sajanī—Of my mistress;—in our community we now call a wife mistress and so Saudha is my co-husband's daughter.

Tin.—Pretty girl. What's your name, my child?

Saudha.—Miss Saudhakirītinī.

Tin.—Lankā?

Saudha.—Not Lankā; Miss Saudhakirītinī Gargari-Chāki.¹

Tin.—What a nice soft name you've given to your daughter.

Aśani—It has a Latin ring about it. Has it any scientific signification?

Sajanī—[Using the respectful and not the familiar pronouns for wife and daughter] No, it hasn't. Before my marriage with her honoured mother, she was called Bhūtī²—an uncouth name smacking of superstition and so I changed it to Saudhakirītinī.

Tin.—But why, if you didn't want to use the name of a god or goddess, couldn't you find a

1. *Lit.* "Rolling hand-mill;" both are titles of Brahmins of lower sections. There is an indecent inuendo.

2. "Blacky."

simple name now customary like Taralā, Saralā, Abalā ?

Sajanī—There is a signification^{*} in the name I gave her. As soon as she was born, the roof of her mother's room subsided in a storm, and buried her. As the roof fell on her head, I call her Saudhakeritini : is not that apt ? And her former father's family name was Gargari and that of mine Chāki ; by a combination of the two we get Gargari-Chāki.

Tin.—Amongst the numerous queer surnames you people possess, have you no *Myachlā* (wash-pan) or some such name ? Select a man of a name like that and marry him to your daughter ; then there will be the unique combination Gargari-Chāki-Myachlā,—an auspicious combination.

Sajanī—No ; her mother wishes her never to marry ; the girl will enjoy eternal virginity.

Aśani—Why ?

Sajanī—It's not necessary that all women should marry. If she remains an eternal virgin, she'll be able to do much good to her country.

Tin.—Is that so ? I see, if a girl remains a maid, there's no objection ; but if a widow doesn't remarry before her husband's funeral fire is cold, there is the devil to pay.

Saudha.—[Speaking in terms of proper respect

of her mother but familiarly addressing her father] I say, Junior Father, hurry up; I must go back to do my gymnastics.

Sajanī—Why? What am I wanted for?

Saudha.—Mother wants you.

Sajanī—(Alarmed) She wants me? Do you know why?

Saudha.—She can't remember where she put the ribbon for her hair last night. She is very angry and there's no one at home to scold. I think she wants you to scold you.

Tin.—Poor man. Is this one of your duties?

Sajanī—What can I do? If she can't find any one to scold, she may have hysterics. [To Saudha] Come along, come along. [To Tinkari] Excuse me one minute, I'll be back directly.

Tin.—What's the use of my waiting here? I will go away too.

Sajanī—No, no; please wait a little. I still have many things to say to you. Aśani Bābu, will you too, stay please?

(Exit Saudha and Sajanī.)

Tin.—Now, Aśaniprakāś, what news? Have you any new "experiment" on hand?

Aśani—Many. I've just invented a perfumed "essence" made of bugs.

Tin.—Really! then otto of roses will be out-in the cold!

(Enter Brother Bānchhārām.)

Bānchhā.—“Glory to Truth, Glory to Truth ;”¹
Equality and Truth, Equality and Truth.

Tin.—“A tree is known by its fruit,” “A tree is known by its fruit.” [These words complete the device on the medicine.]

Bānchhā.—Where is brother Sajanīkānta ?

Tin.—He has gone to appease sister Rajanīkānta.²
But whom have I the honour of addressing ?

Bānchhā.—Ah ! how can I say ?

Tin.—Why, won’t you tell me ? Is there a warrant out against you ? What is your name ?

Bānchhā.—Peradventure I am a “Brother.”

Tin.—I’m not talking to you about our relationship. When two gentlemen are introduced, they are told each other’s name and so I asked you yours.

Bānchhā.—A Brother requires no name ! Names are merely given by others to avoid confusion between one brother and another, of which there is no fear, here.

Tin.—Of course it is other people who give a man a name. Who ever gives himself his own name ?

1. These words are the first half of a device on a well-known patent medicine.

2. This is a male name (for Sajanī’s wife.)

Bānchhā.—Oh ! if you call that a name, peradventure my name is Brother Bānchhārām¹.

Tin.—From your talk, your appearance, your manner, you appear to be a Bengali. But why has your name a Bombay-ish² sound ? What are you by caste ?

Bānchhā.—Caste !

Tin.—Yes, yes, caste—*jūt, jūt*. [Turning to Aśani]
Is he *m,a,d* ?³

Aśani—I think the current of electricity to his brain is not in proper working order. The human body is a battery and the head is its principal cell.

Bānchhā.—Oh ! that I should have heard the word caste ! (*Weeps.*)

Aśani—Certainly the cell of his head is gone wrong. Its “acid” has been used up.

Tin.—Have you no one to take care of you ? Are you allowed to go about alone ? Try and talk sensibly, so that we may enjoy your company.

Bānchhā.—Enjoyment ! laughter ! You want to laugh and make people laugh ? For shame, for shame ! What a lack of decency ! I suppose you are a Hindu, otherwise I would

1. A common name in Bengal. He omits the family professional title “oilman” which indicates a low caste.

2. *Bhāṛ* is common in Parsi names.

3. He spells the word in English.

have addressed you as "Brother." Listen to me and forsake that evil community. Never laugh again, but weep, weep loud ; weeping—it is the only way, remember that weeping is a divine injunction. Does not a child cry the moment it is born ? Weep, weep ! Oh ! how long will it be before this world becomes a joyous vale of tears !

Tin.—Brother Manasārām¹ !

Bānchhā.—Bānchhārām, peradventure.

Tin.—All right, all right, Brother Manasārām.

This day I've learnt wisdom from your words.

I understand that India will never be delivered unless and until every house is filled with laments for the dead, day and night.

Bānchhā.—Not laments for the *dead* but laments of *love*, laments of a new fashion.

Tin.—That comes to the same thing ; it's six of the one and half-a-dozen of the other. Brother Manasārām, before you adopted this religion of tears, you must have belonged to some race or caste. What was it, pray ?

Bānchhā.—Yes ; peradventure I belonged to an indecent idolatrous caste. In that sense I belonged to the Race of the Sun.

Tin.—What—Rājput ?

1. A common Mārwārī name.

Bānchhā.—No, our family title was “Sādhu ;” then the Emperor Jahāngīr gave us the title of “Khān” and so our name becomes Sādhukhān.

Tin.—“Sādhukhān”—are you an oilman ?

Bānchhā.—Yes, in vulgar language that is what it is called, but in reality it is identical with the Race of the Sun, the giver of light to the world, which function in the day is discharged by the Sun, and in the night by that caste you just mentioned, that is, by us peradventure. But I no longer observe caste distinctions—I condescend to dine with Brahmins, Vaidyas, Kayasthas, etc. without any scruple.

Tin.—This is condescension indeed ! Being a shining light in an oilman’s family, you condescend to dine with Brahmins, Kayets, Vaidyas, etc. without any repugnance ; this is highly magnanimous on your part.

Bānchhā.—I can’t help it. In the cause of love all must be borne.

Tin.—Mr. Brother Manasārām oilman, scion of the Solar Race, where have you your dwelling now ?

Bānchhā.—In Seorā¹ Cottage. ,

Tin.—What place is that ?

Bānchhā.—A honey-comb of Brothers and Sisters.

1. Name of a worthless tree. Compare note 3 on page 23.

In the pure domestic¹ connection there between brothers and sisters they ascend the ladder to Heaven.

Tin.—Bravo ! bravo ! I should like to join your company and live in those 'fairy barracks'² and see the ladder to heaven.

Bānchhā.—Oh ! what good fortune ! what an auspicious day ! Weep, weep—

Tin.—Pinch me, pinch me,³ otherwise I can't manage it the first time. Brother Manasārām, what's your father's name ?

Bānchhā.—Our community is new ; we are still all Brothers ; none has as yet attained Fatherhood. The *Pāribārik* (domestic) cottage has only lately been built and Brothers and Sisters have not long joined, and peradventure those who have made special advances will soon become "Fathers."

Tin.—I don't refer to that. I mean who of the Solar Race is your father ?

Bānchhā.—Oh ! that you should refer to that father whom I abjured seeing that he has form ! I cannot bring myself to mention his name before you.

1. The word *pāribārik* has a hidden meaning.

2. *Pāribārik*, a pun as well as an allusion to the Brahmo Ladies' Barracks in Cornwallis Street.

3. The allusion, I am told, is to small boys being made to cry in theatrical performances by being pinched.

Tin.—Why ? have you forgotten it ?

Bānchhā.—No, the name lacks decency !

Aśani—Lacks decency ! A father's name lack decency ! Never mind, but whatever it is, tell us, we'll listen. There are no policemen about.

Bānchhā.—What is that the loss of which constitutes death ?

Aśani—Electricity ?

Tin.—No, no, stop. Is it *prān* (life) ? Perhaps your father's name is Prānkrishna ?

Bānchhā.—No, no, more indecent than that ; it is the vulgar form of that word.

Tin.—What ? *Parān* ? Oh ! you're the son of old Pārān the oilman ?

Bānchhā.—(Weeping) Oh ! oh ! that I should have to listen to this indecent name—to the mention of a father who has form ! What tribulation ! But without tribulation, none is led to repentance, and without repentance there is no salvation for the soul. Let tribulation come, let tribulation come like the 'bore' in August, let tribulation come like the great cyclone of October (1869), let tribulation come like the great flood of 1823, let tribulation come like the charge of the police, let it pour down like mustard seed from a bursting bag ; let the oil-press of tribulation grind the body into husk,

nevertheless will the soul drip drop by drop like oil into the cup of the heart. (*Weeps.*)

Tin.—Well, as regards your father—pray stop your howling for a moment—is it because your father has form that you have deserted him? Pray what are you yourself, with or without form?

Bānchhā.—That I cannot answer exactly—yet. At present I am only a “Brother;” when I become “Reverend Brother,” then peradventure I may get light.

Tin.—When your breed of “Brothers” is reduced to formlessness, I’ll sacrifice a couple of buffaloes at Kālighāt.

(*Re-enter Sajanī.*)

Sajanīkānta! You’ve advanced, I see. When I frequented your meetings, you used not to go to such extremes. How many more members have you like this oilman brother?

Sajanī—Who? Brother Bānchhārām? He is peerless—without a second! [To Bānchhārām] So, Brother, you’ve returned after completing your noble work of famine relief in Bīrbhum?

Bānchhā.—Yes, the famine has been checked and out of its funds a widow has been rescued as well.

Sajanī—How? what do you mean?

Bānchhā.—That sister's name is Kshamāsundarī Pāludhi. Her eldest daughter is married and has children, but her youngest daughter lives with her. The very day after the sister had a sacred elopement with me, her son resigned his appointment in the Post Office and disappeared.¹ Now the sister is my wife.

Tin.—All difficulties will be settled when she bears a son to be your nephew. Capital ! she's got three children of her own and has some grandchildren as well ; then she must be quite a little girl. Marriages of widows of this kind are most urgent.

Bānchhā.—Peace ! Peace ! Peace !

Tin.—Have you any record of the sister's age ?

Bānchhā.—Her age cannot be computed. The look of the sister reminds me of a time-honoured sage.

Tin.—What, does she grow a beard ?

Bānchhā.—How can sisters have beards ?

Tin.—Why not ? If in your community a Brahmin lady with grandchildren can marry an oilman, why cannot your religion cause a beard, the outward badge of your faith, to sprout on the chin of a female ? Fie on your vaunted

1. The implication is that he ran away from shame at his mother's sacred elopement.

religion. I've seen many English ladies with beards; Christianity must be a more powerful religion.

Bānchhā.—You should remember that the new religion is still in its infancy.

Aśani—If the women of your community want beards, all they have to do is to wear my new electric amulets. They have cured many cases of baldness.

Bānchhā.—We do not want idolatrous cures. Ere long a *mahātmā* will appear, who by his prayers, his penitences, and gift of the gab will remedy this defect in our poor and weak Sisters. Brother Sajanikānta! I had something very important to say to you, but I will see you again; now permit me to depart.

Sajanī—Must you depart?

Bānchhā.—Peradventure.

Tin.—Don't say "peradventure" about going, my dear fellow; say "certainly" and be off, or else let *us* be off. Enough of the company of this scion of the Solar Race. He has bored¹ us to death. Show us your back, I adjure you in the name of your Holy Sisters.

Bānchhā.—O Heavenly Father, where art thou Mother! O Thou Friend of my soul,² put

1. *Lit.* burnt to ashes. A play on Solar.

2. A term for God.

repentance into the hearts of these erring sinners ! (*Sobs aloud.*)

Tin.—O you scion of the Solar Race, not so loud, please. The children of the neighbourhood will be terrified. You have exceeded the limits of our patience. I'm off, Sajanī. Come along, Aśanī. What do you mean by waving your hands in front of his face ?

Aśanī—I'm making my mesmeric passes to try and restore the electric current in the fellow's brain.

Tin.—Stop your mesmerism. Come along, let us go.

(*Exit Tinkari and Aśanī.*)

Sajanī—Brother Bānchhārām ! what's that important matter you had to tell me ?

Bānchhā.—Brother ! I have married for the sake of my country ; for its reformation and my own soul ; but my possession by the Sister has put me into many difficulties, and that is why I could not visit you.

Sajanī—Why, how is that ?

Bānchhā.—This sister possesses a somewhat heroic temperament. I have forsaken my hereditary trade and have embarked on this work of reformation with no hankering after money, as you know. But the Sister would like to live in a better style. Moreover she is unduly jealous.

And as there are several other Sisters in Seorā Cottage, she objects to staying there at all.

(*Enter Kshamāsundarī.*)

But here comes the soul-delighting Sister herself, in her corporeal form !

Sajanī—(*Aside*) I see that a sacred love-quarrel is likely to arise between the Brother and the Sister, in this public room. I had better be off. (*Aloud*) Brother Bānchhārām, Mrs. Chāki is slightly indisposed, so I'll listen to you another time. I must go home now. This room is free to all ; pursue your converse of love.

(*Exit.*)

Bānchhā.—Brother ! Brother ! You are leaving me alone—but what brings you here, my darling, so unexpectedly ?

Kshamā.—Why not ? I'm no longer a bride of the harem. There is, I'm sure, no restriction in your community against ladies going about in the streets even. But that is neither here nor there ; I will not stay a moment longer in that beastly place. Have you found other lodgings ?

Bānchhā.—You see, my darling, I can't afford a separate house and a separate cook.

Kshamā.—You said nothing about this before you married me. Do you remember the hopes

you held out to me when you enticed me away from my house, or shall I remind you of them ? Did you not promise that when we were married, I should not be required to cook for you, or wait on you, or do any work ; but that I should have an English education, and dress like English ladies, and do nothing, and go where I liked and eat nice things ? But it's another story now. No one knows what I suffer.

Bānchhā.—That is just why I urge you to remain in Seorā Cottage, so that you may not have to cook. Brother Gobardhan has taken over charge of the kitchen to save the Sisters all trouble ; it is a pity that you do not want to stay there.

Kshamā.—Of course you want me to stay here. I know why. A host of viragoes romp about day and night. How can any woman live safe with her husband in that house, especially with a dear husband taken in place of one lost ?

Bānchhā.—Peace, Peace, they are all Holy Sisters.

Kshamā.—I've seen plenty of such Holy Sisters.

"Sister" is not a blood relationship amongst you, it's a mere designation. But hang all this talk—

Bānchhā.—For shame ; again you use vulgar words—

Kshamā.—I'll see to my manners when we are in

the Meeting-House. Manners cannot be observed between husband and wife everywhere and always.

Bānchhā.—What expressions ! You are going from vulgarity to indecency. Why do you say husband and wife ? Cannot you say Brother and Sister ?

Kshamā.—I'm only a novice and have not yet mastered your gibberish. The Sisters of your Seorā Cottage are fine priestesses indeed.

Bānchhā.—Oh ! Oh ! what idolatry ! what idolatry !—(*Weeps.*)

Kshamā.—Do I again see you flooded with grief ? You cry-baby—crying at everything ; an old fellow like you weeping at the least thing. By all means shed a tear or two on hearing a sermon or a hymn, that is very proper ; but what's *this* fellow ? If one says 'come to dinner,' you say boo-hoo ; if asked 'where are you going,' you reply boo-hoo ; 'how do you do,' boo-hoo. It's most worrying ; the house is like a burning ghāt. Now stop this for a bit and think of what's to be done. I've not lost my caste merely to be a maidservant, you must know. Listen to me ; drop this business of reformation and the rest of it ; try for some work ; our family is bound to increase, and not decrease.

Bānchhā.—It is very hard to find employment

now ; wait a little ; after the floods we have had, there must be another famine.

Kshamā.—In that case, perhaps you will bring disgrace on another respectable family ?

Bānchhā.—What do you mean ?

Kshamā.—I mean just as you disgraced my father by enticing me away.

Bānchhā.—One and Only One¹ ! (*To his wife*) You alone are quite sufficient : I need no second.

Kshamā.—Then what is your game ?

Bānchhā.—How great is the power of love ! How incomprehensible ! Whenever famine, flood, or any other calamity visits the country, I have no trouble in earning sufficient to keep me going ; more, I put by a little. It is my belief that the misfortunes of the sinful Hindus are for the good of us (Brahmos) and it is therefore that such blessed events happen. Oh ! pray for a famine and all our wants will be supplied. (*Weeps.*)

Kshamā.—You're crying again (*raises her fist*). Well, famine and such things are going to be considered later on. At present let us go and find your "Reverend"² brother Advaitachandra,

1. The motto of the Brahmos.

2. She, however, mispronounces the English word 'reverend' and makes it *bhyārāṇḍā* which means the castor-oil plant. "To fry castor-oil seeds" is an idiom for "to do nothing, to idle."

so that you can satisfy me with an account of all my jewellery that I brought away from my father's house.

Bānchhā.—Jewellery ! O yes, I deposited the things with the 'Reverend' brother Advaitachandra, but long ago they found their way to the goldsmith's.

Kshamā.—Well, let us go and take them back from the goldsmith's. I no longer wish them to be melted down and converted into English jewellery. Not a single article has been made in these six months. I don't consider your conduct satisfactory. Not one of your promises has proved true.

Bānchhā.—They have found their way to the goldsmith's it is true, but there is no prospect of their return.

Kshamā.—What's that you say ?

Bānchhā.—Having received no divine inspiration, I hitherto abstained from revelation ; but recently having been inspired I can say with open heart and pure mind that those trifling objects of sinful pride were converted into monies, which were righteously expended in marriage expenses, in banquets, in the purchase of law books for Miss Satyabālā Śrīmanī, and in helping the Brothers.

Kshamā.—What, do you mean to say that my jewellery is all gone ?

Bānchhā.—All. Peace! Peace! Peace!

Kshamā.—Dam'n your cry of Peace.¹ You've squandered all my jewellery?—my daughter-in-law's jewellery? You blackguard! it was you who made me bring it with me, you cheat!

Bānchhā.—Mrs. Sādhukhān, you forget yourself. Do you know to whom you are speaking?

Kshamā.—To a thief, a cheat, an impostor, a canting hypocrite—

Bānchhā.—Take care.

Kshamā.—“Stupid,” swine! Do you try to brow-beat me? I will slipper you.

Bānchhā.—Look here, I have put up with this as you are a “Sister.” Had you been a Hindu wife, I should have whipped you before this.

Kshamā.—What do you say, you low oilman? You dare to raise your hand to a Brahmin's daughter? Thank your stars that I deign to live with you. Fourteen generations of your family will obtain salvation if they can merely sip the water in which I have washed my feet.

Bānchhā.—You wretched, sinful, wicked, woman! There are “Sisters” all round us: don't you know that they will overhear us? Is this

1. *Lit.* I will give 20 strokes of the birch on the face of your ‘peace.’

what you've learnt from the lectures on *pāri-bārik*, domestic duty ?

Kshamā.—You go and learn your duties at your *pari* barrack, O pillar of religion ! To-day I'll make you disgorge my jewellery, and then and then only will I let you go.

Bānchhā.—Impossible ! In this perishable world what departs n'er returns.

Kshamā.—I'll just show you whether it returns or not. I'll drag you before the police ; I'll get you taken up for theft and then you'll know what sort of a Brahmin woman I, Kshamā, am.

Bānchhā.—(*Recitatively*)

The longings of beauty are ever for ornaments¹.
Once sold they never come back again.

Kshamā.—You bearded,² blackguardly, monkey ! Making a joke of me—ridiculing me ! Come along ; I'll drag you before the police by that goaty beard of yours. (*Seizes his beard.*)

Bānchhā.—Don't, don't, O Kshamāsundarī, forgive me—Peace, Peace,—

(*Exit both.*)

1. Parody of a Brahmo hymn.

2. Brahmos generally wear long beards.

SCENE IV.—KANDARPA'S HOUSE.

Kandarpakānta and his maternal grandmother.

Kandarpa—Grandmother, I beseech you, consent.

If I can't give away in marriage some widow of my family, I shan't be able to show my face in the congregation. My mother died in my infancy and you brought me up. I know you love me dearly, don't refuse me ; save my reputation in our enlightened community ; do make up your mind to marry again.

Grandmother—O Kandarpa ! how you talk ! My years are three score and thirteen. When I was fifty, your grandfather departed this life.¹ Now it only remains for you to bury my remains under the sacred basil. When will our Lord Gaurchandra² have mercy on me and take me to himself ? I marry again ? How can you suggest such a thing ? Is it *possible* for a Hindu widow to be remarried ? I should lose my religion, lose my religion !

Kandarpa—Grandmother, I'm making a very reasonable suggestion to you. As long as our widows do not remarry, so long there is no chance of India's being delivered. If you were

1. *Lit.* left his body in a posture of *yoga* at Brindāban.

2. *Gaurchandra*, an affectionate name for Chaitanya, used by his disciples and followers.

once to hear Brother Sajanīkānta's lecture, not to speak of *one*, you would marry ten men before leaving the lecture-hall even. While listening to his lectures, I get so uplifted that I feel tempted to hang myself to give my beloved Subhadrā a chance of becoming a widow and delivering our country by remarrying.

Grandmother—Kandarpa, my darling, enough of this childishness. Go and mind your studies and leave me alone to repeat the name of Lord Gaurchandra.

Kandarpa—No, grandmother, that won't do ; I must put an end to your sufferings. I've almost fixed on a suitable bridegroom for you—Sebakrām, the printer at Shashthī Bābu's press—just twenty-five. He is ready to marry a widow if he can get an increment of rupees five ; I'll pay that out of my own pocket. I'll make you wear shell bracelets again and use vermillion ;¹ wear a *chikan sārī* ; hang a nose-drop from that straight nose of yours and put on tinkling anklets that tinkle whenever you move ; and then, from joy, my heart will expand like the Chowringhee Maidān. Seeing you, enlightened people will declare that Kandarpakānta is a worthy son of Mother

1. Widows do not wear bracelets nor use vermillion, etc.

India, since he has made his widowed grandmother marry again and has thus furthered the cause of the deliverance of his country. Consent, grandmother, consent ; I can no longer, with dry eyes, bear the sight of your misery.

Grandmother—But Kandarpa, what sufferings have I ? I have been able to bring you up ; we have come to Calcutta ; you have read a large amount of English stuff ; and, sooner or later, you are likely to become a Police Inspector. What sufferings can I have ? For instance, I have lately made the pilgrimage to holy Navadvīp and if through your piety I can once visit Brindāban, I shall consider my life well-spent.

Kandarpa—Grandmother, you can't read or write ; you haven't studied English ; you have never attended a meeting ; you don't know how to knit ; you can't play the harmonium, and that is why you are not conscious of your own sufferings. Come, grandmother, tell me how you feel in the spring time when the zephyr blows, and the cuckoo calls among the mango blossoms, and the bees are busy humming in the flower gardens ; do you miss nothing ? Grandmother, you are a simple-hearted weak woman. How much longer will you live in this state of

dreadful widowhood ? (*Calling to his servant*)
 Hic ! Nadērchānd, what're you doing ? Look sharp, I've got to go out.

Nadē—(*Off stage*) I'm c-o-m-i-n-g.

Grandmother—Kandarpakānta, my darling, you must not go out ; I won't let you remain in Calcutta any longer. I don't know what whore-son has bewitched my dear child, or what magic leaf has been given him, to make him so insane. Come, my child, let us go back to our village, and I will have you treated by Rajanīkānta Kaviraj's son. He has got some special *Madhyamnārāyan* oil.¹ It will cure you in a month.

(*Enter Nadērchānd.*)

Nadē—Here is your *pāchkān* (*chāpkān*), Sir.

Kandarpa—Give it to me. (*Takes the 'chāpkān'*)

Hullo ! why is it so sticky ?

Nadē—Didn't you tell me to brush it ? I brushed it, so of course it is sticky.

Kandarpa—You brute, you've covered it with blacking ; I told you to brush the dust off.

Nadē—But it is all the better for the blacking. See how it shines. If asked, you can say you have been using English scent. Don't both smell alike ?

1. A cooling oil used in lunacy.

Kandarpa—Go and get my cap, my spectacles, etc.

(*Exit Nadē.*)

Grandmother—Don't go out, dear Kandarpa, I adjure you by my head, don't go out.

Kandarpa—Grandmother, how you talk ! A lecture is being given by the Zenana Mission of Bengal and I have to sit at the table near the President and lead the clapping ; and you mean to say that you really don't want me to go ? As soon as I can get you remarried, I will buy shoes and a hat for you, and insist on your dressing like an enlightened woman. I shall walk out with you, arm in arm.

Grandmother—What witch has cursed me ! What miserable woman has turned my dear child into a lunatic !

Kandarpa—Grandmother, be sensible. I see you are pining away in widowhood ; you'll die soon unless you are married again. Just think how long it is since you have eaten *hilsā* stew ;¹ you don't know how you suffer but you will realise it when you become enlightened.

(*Enter Nadērchūd.*)

Nadē—Here are your spectacles and here's your cap.

1. Hindu widows are not allowed to eat fish.

Kandarpa—(Taking them) Where's the beard?
And where's the bandage for my eyes—yes let
me have them. (*Puts on the beard.*)

Grandmother—Really he has become a lunatic.
See, he is disguising himself as a goblin, by
tying a horse's tail on his chin. O Kandarpa,
what's up with you ; what's up with you ? Oh !
if Ananga Thākur's daughter were only here,
she would exorcise the spirit at once, with the
help of an amulet.

Kandarpa—You may say what you like, grand-
mother, you are very ignorant. What can I
do ? My beard has not grown yet, and so I
must wear a false one.¹ If I haven't a beard,
how can I be thought enlightened ? Come
along, Nadē, blindfold me.

(*Nadērchānd blindfolds Kandarpa.*)

Grandmother—You wicked servant, why are you
blindfolding my boy ? What sort of place is
this Calcutta and what sort of enlightenment is
this ? Do English education and enlighten-
ment require you to go round and round in
an oil-press² like a bullock ?

Kandarpa—What are you saying about going
round and round in an oil-press ?—It's your

1. Beards are the sign of the Brahmos.

2. Bullocks' eyes are bandaged in the oil-press.

head that is going round and round. How can I go out 'in the streets without bandaging my eyes? This is the city of Calcutta; in the streets, in the verandas, everywhere there are many immoral women. Would not my mind be contaminated by seeing them? Would not my morals be at stake? How many horses, bullocks, asses, dogs, and cats are wandering about in the streets stark naked? How can I look at them? Would not evil thoughts arise in my mind? Grandmother, your Kandarpa is no longer a country boy who climbs trees. He has lived in Calcutta for six months; has got rid of his Eastern-Bengal patois; he has read English; played football; smoked cigarettes¹; attended the Brāhmo Samāj; heard lectures; and become enlightened. The other day there was a large *srādh* ceremony in a Raja's house, when many elephants and horses were given away in charity. I too was invited, but I ~~didn't~~ go, I didn't go. Something horribly indecent happened, I hear that an immoral woman came and sang hymns.²

Grandmother—O you bad boy, you didn't listen to the *kirttan*? You didn't purify your body

1. *Lit.* Bird's-eye.

2. Nautch girls sing songs of Krishna at *srādh* ceremonies.

by hearing the hymns in praise of Lord Krishna ?

Kandarpa—Pooh ! you say purify my body !

Don't you know that I might have slipped into immorality by looking at that immoral woman ? She would sing "Where is Krishna ?" and her glances would create a longing in my heart. Aren't you aware that when a man becomes enlightened, frequents the Samāj, has risen in the scale, the mere sight of a woman arouses evil thoughts ? But if such women happen to be emancipated women, that alters the case¹. Well, I must go now. Several enlightened ladies are waiting for me in my "parlour." I will send them to you. They will enlighten you somehow, by argument or by force ; they will make you agree to remarry. Nadē, hold my hand and lead me out. Now take care, don't raise your eyes ; don't look at women, or you will fall into immorality.

Nadē—Sir, I belong to country people, and *our* mouths do not water at the sight of every woman, as do those of people who know English. Come.

(Exit Nadē and Kandarpa.)

Grandmother—Save me, Lord Gaurchandra !

1. A hit at the hypocrisy of the Brahmos.

Restore my Kandarpa's mind and I'll send you delicate food offerings. I will take him on a pilgrimage to holy Navadvīp and give a great feast to the vaishnavas. O this cursed Calcutta, this cursed Calcutta ! I sent my child to study and he has become ridiculous. Alas ! my child has become a ridiculous caricature !

(Enter emancipated females.)

First female—Lo there I think sits a widow of
Bengal !

Her hair is loose, her dress is poor ;
Her heart is a field untilld by Love ;
Her widow's breast is ever rent by sighs.

Chorus—*Lo there I think sits a widow of Bengal !*
No flower adorns her hair,
Her fingers knit no wool,
No ear-drops grace her ears,
She has not, yet, eloped from home,
Her eyes express her helplessness.

Chorus—*Lo there I think sits a widow of Bengal !*
Her age no more than three score years and ten,
No bridegroom's by her side ; her nights are sad.
Should her body suffer all these direful pangs
When students are available in such great
numbers ?

Chorus—*Lo there I think sits a widow of Bengal !*

you of your long-standing pangs of widowhood by means of that infallible remedy, a nice young husband. Soon, very soon, thou wilt walk hand in hand with thy youthful husband and join us in our airings in the Maidān. Thy long-standing pangs of widowhood have withered the tree of love in thy heart. Come, let us revive it by the streams of holy love.

(SONG)

Granny we will deck thee as a bride
With great care, we whose husbands are still alive.
We will twine thy silver locks with taste,
And place flowers amongst thy plaits,
Then we 'll see if thou wilt snare the heart of
a young man.
We will dress thee in fine muslin, gay with flowers ;
Fish thou'lt have twice a day ;
No more widows' fasts for thee ;
We, thy sisters, are busy scattering Love.

End of Act I.

ACT II.

SCENE I.—SHASHTHI BABU'S STUDY.

(*Shashthī discovered practising declamation.*)

Shashthī—"If I live—if I am permitted to breathe
"the air of this terrestrial globe—if the steam
"that animates this corporeal mechanism is not
"exhausted,—if the scarlet fluid called blood
"flows in my veins—if pulsation remains regular
"in my radial artery,—then I promise you—I
"give you my most solemn assurance—Ladies
"and Gentlemen—with all the emphasis I can
"command, that I will shake the Empire to its
"very foundation !"

(*Enter his mother, Śrīmatī.*)

Śrīmatī—Well, Shashthī, my son, are you alone ?

Shashthī—Yes, yes, what do you want ?

Śrīmatī—I'm an old woman. Why should I be
ashamed to come out of the *zenāna* ?

Shashthī—Yes, yes, you are an old woman, that's
why I'm asking—you come straight to the
men's quarters. Suppose a visitor were to
come,—what would he think of you ?

Śrīmatī—What would he think of seeing me here ?
Why, you yourself force my daughter-in-law
to present herself here before many of your
men-friends.

Shashthī—But did I bring her in her ordinary clothes? I brought her here well-dressed like an enlightened woman. She'd a jacket on her back and shoes on her feet. But you—your grey hair hanging down your back, a dirty ragged wrapper, your figure crooked as the letter Z—why if any one discovered that I was born from *your* womb, *I* too should be thought a common boor.

Śrīmatī—I would wear a good wrapper if you gave me one. You must remember how long I have been entreating you for half a *thān* and can't get it. My sister, your aunt, gave me this rag; somehow or other I have covered my nakedness with it.

Shashthī—Why? What are you saying? I never gave you any clothes to wear? What a lie! Only the other day I gave you half a length of *nainsuk*—it's not two years ago.

Śrīmatī—When do you say you gave it to me?

Shashthī—Have you forgotten so soon? Don't you remember I bought a length, and half was dyed and used for flags on my birthday, and half was given to you?

Śrīmatī—Ah! just my luck! Do you think I was allowed to keep it? My daughter-in-law took it to make a cover for her box or some such thing.

Shashthī—Be civil. You should speak of her

respectfully. You're very rude. Well, what do you want now ?

Śrīmatī—What do I want ? Listen, my son, you have been giving me Rs. 3/- a month to live on. I can't manage on that, even though I take nothing but a little *gur* and water for supper. However, I don't complain about that. But why, my son, did you deduct three annas from even that sum this month ?

Shashthī—You ask why I paid you less ? Haven't you been regularly cheating me by three annas a month ? Thank God, Nīradā told me, there are two fasts in the month, and that in those days you eat nothing. What becomes of the savings of those two days ? Besides, the number of days in a month is sometimes more, sometimes less. Without counting this I have made an average deduction of one and a half annas a fast day.

Śrīmatī—Oh ! because I fast, you cut me ! Don't you know that I spend those savings on a little treat to myself the day before and the day after the fasts ?

Shashthī—A-a-h ! As you don't eat anything on the fast days, you eat double the day before ! Any one can be religious and practise this kind of fasting that produces surfeits. Be off ; I know these tricks. Aren't you ashamed of being

supported by me ? Bengali parents have no "self-respect." It's a wonder they *care* to be dependent on their sons, instead of living independently.

Śrīmatī—Well, Shashthī, do you mean that your mother should earn her own bread and that you should not support her ? Never let such words pass your lips. Heaven will bless you if you respect your old mother.

Shashthī—Not a mother like you. Well I know how to respect a mother. Day and night I am working for Mother India.

Śrīmatī—Who's she ? Who's your mother ?

Shashthī—Mother India, Mother India, my country, my country, they call her our "Mother Country." Don't you understand ?

Śrīmatī—Go, make my daughter-in-law understand all this English. How can I understand it ? But, oh my son, don't cut my three annas, I beg of you.

Shashthī—Look here, if you go on worrying me like this, I'll stop your allowance altogether. Now go away. I'm going out and I want to lock the door. I can't neglect the needs of my mother-country, and waste my time in talking with you.

Śrīmatī—I'm an unhappy woman ! Such treatment from my own son !

Shashthī—You know you conceived me by accident and had no power to refuse me a place in your womb ;—so far it is right for me to call you mother. But if I worry about my mother day and night, I can't attend to the needs of Mother India. My regard, my respect, my sentiment, my "energy", my *ajiteshan* (agitation), appropriating subscriptions—all all are for Her. I have no mother but Mother India. I'm now India's son, and India's only.

Śrīmatī—Ah, be it so, be it so. And may that lucky woman fare well, who has enticed my son to her side and turned him against his own mother ! You say India, India. I know who India is. She is your mother-in-law, the mother of my daughter-in-law. What / should have got from bringing a man-child into the world, *she* has got by giving birth to a female. Well, may she prosper, may she prosper !

(Exit.)

Shashthī—Ah ! "botheration, botheration !" Mothers are the "sources of all evils,"—especially our Bengali mothers. They conceive us by the "accident of Nature," and then bully us all their lives. Why, wasn't there some other way of letting us come into the world than out of the womb of silly uneducated women—"enlightened men" like me, "who are destined

to accomplish great things in this world"—men able in all ways ?

“—————O, why did God,
 “Creator wise, that peopled highest heaven
 “With spirits masculine, create at last
 “This novelty on earth, this fair defect
 “Of nature, and not fill the world at once
 “With men, as angels without feminine,
 “Or find some other way to generate
 “Mankind ?”

But then our “better-half” wives could not have existed. So I say that as the “age advances” and our world grows old, the intellect of mankind grows more, and “intelligence” and “foresight” become “keener.” Now Milton—he didn’t think of wives when he wrote those lines against women. Why, it’d be quite easy to put things right ; “that is,” if God be “omnipotent” and if I were God, then just as Adam and Eve were made at one creation, I too would create numerous ready-made couples—in *my* “community” at least.

(*Enter Nīradā.*)

Nīradā—*O-go* [= *hullo!* and also *O cow!*].

Shashthī—Moo, moo.

Nīradā—What’s the matter ?

Shashthī—Like question like answer ; you said

"go" which means "cow" and I answered moo, moo.

Nīradā—What should I call you then ?

Shashthī—What English ladies call their husbands—such as Harry—short for Henry, or Bill—for William, and so on. I have over and over told you to address me like that. Sometimes call me "familiarly" "Shashthī," sometimes say affectionately "Dear Byātā"—short for "Byātāvyāl." You see you are not making much *progress*.

Nīradā—How do you make that out ? I've discarded my veil ; sometimes I wear shoes and stockings ; I show no respect to my mother-in-law, I address her in haughty terms ; I show myself to your men-friends. What *more* progress do you want ?

Shashthī—You must be quite independent in manner ; be free and easy like me.

Nīradā—What ? Do you want me to wear a beard, and a *chogā*, and a *chāpkān* like you ? Surely you can't expect me to do that ?

Shashthī—You need not change your face. I want you to be very much like the followers of Sajanī Bābu and such people, though I don't follow him. But you must accompany me wherever I go. Come, let us take an outing in the Eden Gardens this very day.

Nīradā—I'll go, if you let me remain in the carriage. I can't do more than that.

Shashthī—No, we must walk arm in arm in the gardens like the English.

Nīradā—Look here, you go to extremes in everything. Would it look well for a Bengali woman to do this? How *could* I do such a thing?

Shashthī—You will do it *well*. You will look splendid in English clothes; splendid! Oh, how nice you'll look! My love, is it right for a non-parcil beauty like yours to be shut up in the four walls of the *senāna*?

Nīradā—No, no! Shame, shame! What will people think of me? What would my brother and my mother say if they heard of it? My women neighbours too will come to see me,—they will all ridicule me. What I have already done is enough, and no Bengali woman should go further.

Shashthī—No, no, no, you don't understand. My temper is good and so I speak without heat. Mr. Damupoddar's wife hung back like you and did not want to be emancipated. But one day he slipped her and she at once became thoroughly emancipated.

Nīradā—Bury the creature. I quite understand—are you gone mad?

(SONG)

Shame on thee, shame on thee, shame on thee,
shame.

Hast thou become insane ?

O, put me not to shame, I kneel at thy feet,
 See, see my heart beat. My tongue is parched
from fear.

O sir, how can I with other men associate ?
 My lord, you forget that I am a Bengali lady.

Shashthī—Nīradā, I am not the sort of person
 to go mad. Now I have an object in this :
 I have something to gain. I *must* mix with
 the party of Sajanī & Co. As we do not think
 so much of female liberty as they do, they dis-
 like us. For a few days I must mix with
 them. They are taking their ladies to the
 Eden Gardens to-day, and I have promised to
 “meet” them there with you.

(Enter Phatik.)

Phatik—Bhyātābhyāl, Bhyātābhyāl, brother-in-law
 Bhyātābhyāl.

Shashthī—Hullo ! why do you come here so un-
 ceremoniously ?

Phatik—I won't do so again. Wait till my cards
 are printed. Now ; just enter my name on
 your register.

Shashthī—What do you mean by entering your name on my register ?

Phatik—Don't you understand ? I too will be a patriot. I will have a try at it. I can't get any work to do but I have never complained. I *can't* hold my tongue any longer. Negotiations are going on for my daughter Khukī's marriage with Hārān Chatterjee's son, and the brute has given me a list of Rs. 5,000/- worth of things he wants. It is high time for me to become a "patriot." Down with Hinduism, I despise it !

Shashthī—"Are you in earnest ?" Are you speaking the truth ?

Phatik—(*Making faces at him*) *Gātur gātur gost*—why, certainly I'm in earnest. I have told my barber I won't be shaved any more—and he loses his employment. I'll certainly grow a beard now and become a patriot. Well, brother-in-law, only you, I, and Nīradā are here, and no one else. Now just advise me. Tell me what I should do. Shall I become a patriot, or shall I join the Brāhmo Samāj, or shall I be what is now-a-days called a red-ochred Hindu ? Tell me, what to do, which plan is the best, the most profitable ?

Shashthī—"Oh ! you are joking."

Phatik—(*Making faces*) *Pok-poking*.

Shashthī—Shut up, shut up, don't be joking. I've to go now to the Eden Gardens*with your sister.

Phatik—What? With Nīradā?

Nīradā—(*Stammering*) Well, look here, brother—, brother—, I mean brother—oh what shall I do, brother? There's a proverb, "I have fallen into the clutches of a Mogul, and he forces me to eat beef with him."

Phatik—Damn you brother-in-law! I see your patriotism has gone too far. My name's on your list, and I suppose you will ask me too to take my wife about in public. I can't follow in your wake. Goodbye, I'd better go. I'll try and join the party of the red-ochred one: being novel, it pays better.

Nīradā—O, brother, what shall I do?

Phatik—Ask that brute. He wants a lesson to bring him to his senses and he'll get it some day. I'm going.

(*Exit.*)

Shashthī—A fine relation this! *Sālā, Sālā*—oh, this is too much vulgarity. Look here, Nīr, go and get ready and put on your walking dress. I'll go to the printing office but I'll be back in a minute.

(*Exit.*)

Nīradā—It will be fun going to the gardens; but I'm afraid; there are so many Englishmen

'there. However, *he*¹ will be with me. Besides, there are some other women too. Some of my women neighbours will hold me up to ridicule—but what matter? If my husband wants to take me with him,—can I refuse him? It is not as if I were going of my own accord.

(Enter some women neighbours.)

O, my dears, here you are, what a relief! Well, Kāyet Thākurjhī, you call my husband your brother, so you'd better talk to him like a sister and oppose his wishes.

Kāyet Thākurjhī—Oppose whom? Oppose what? What's the matter?

Nīradā—Modesty does not allow me even to look my husband in the house, so how can I walk abroad with him holding his hand?

Kāyet Thākurjhī—Walk with whom? Walk where?

Nīradā—With your brother, who else? He wants to take me to a place called the *Hiiden Gāden* or something like that—where English men and women enjoy the cool in the evening. How *can* I walk about holding his hand?

Kāyet Thākurjhī—*(Sarcastically)* Go by all means. You need not fear. Your husband is a deliverer of this country and is as obstinate as a

1. *i.e.* her husband.

pig¹ about abolishing *parda*. He'll have his men-friends with him—and won't they enjoy gazing at his wife's beauty? (*To a neighbour*) But she *wants* to go; don't you stand on her way. There's a saying, 'we have fallen into the hands of a Dajjāl,² we must put up with worry and trouble day and night.' It won't do to feel shy, so dress yourself and go to the Town Hall.

Nīradā—Very well, sister, very well. It's a nice kind person I've asked for assistance. There's a saying—"He whom I ask for advice casts me into new difficulties." I asked you to remonstrate with your brother, instead of that you begin to sing Pāñchālī responses.

Kāyet Thākurihī—Well, sister, what harm have I said? What do *you* say Jnānadā? Why are *you* silent? Go on; say that he whose honour is at stake does not care, so why should we mind? He tells you to stroll in public; stroll. There will be other men in the herd holding their wives and sisters by the hand. You'll be all there—your hair hanging down your back, no veil on, you walk past culling flowers, your husband won't mind if some other man touches you. Ah! my Shashthīdādā's mind is simple

1. There is an allusion to Vishnu's third incarnation (as a wild boar) when he delivered the world.

2. Antichrist; hence a great deceiver.

and his intellect is dull ! He tells you to go, so go *very* well-dressed. (*To other neighbours*) You too press her to go, you too press her.

Jnānadā—The mere narration has astounded me—

I am too astonished to speak. I wonder if *my* husband will go mad. I am shivering with fright.

Niradā—Put away all this joking, sister. Do just tell me what to do. He will be here in a minute. If I say I won't go with him, I only make bad worse.

Śiladā—Who knows, sister, what your mind is really like ? You are very lucky to have such a husband. If *my* husband were to speak to *me* in such endearing tones, I should go mad with love and die of joy. I would wear my smartest clothes, put on my small stock of jewellery, oil my hair, plait my locks, and stick roses between the hair pins : my uncle owns a tailor's shop, I should beg a jacket from him : I would paint my lips with the best betel ; s-l-o-w-l-y I would draw the antimony across my eyelashes : I would stick bits of *belā*-scented cotton into my ear recesses ; I would strut like a peacock and jingle my anklets ; I would get shoes from a Chinaman (a fig for the gossips). —But I can't do all this. Ah ! I have got such a *stupid* husband, long-faced, drawn, gray-haired, clean-shaven, somnolent, loose-tongued,

too heavy to leave his seat, much less able to go out walking with me. He cares about nothing—just like an old Methusaleh. All he says is, “We are the bulwark of Hinduism.” I must have sinned greatly to have been awarded such a husband. At the hands of this weaver [proverbially stupid] I have to swim across the swamp [*i.e.* suffer unforeseen troubles].

Kāyet Thākurjhī—Just see Śīladā's regrets. How she would like to dress herself in flying colours and walk about !

Śīladā—No, no, Kāyet Thākurjhī, not so. I say nothing of my likings ; but if my husband *takes* me with him, I shall think nothing of the disgrace.

Nīradā—Oh ! Stop all this joking, Kāyet Thākurjhī, and do tell me, I entreat you, what I'm to do.

Kāyet Thākurjhī—What are you to do ? where are you to go ? Shashthīdādā has got some magot in his head and wants to take a zenana lady into a party of *vagabond, wastrel, spendthrifts*. Can no one be accounted an enlightened person unless he marches his wife about in public ? *My* husband (whom every one calls a great and wise man) has a thorough knowledge of English. He is devoted to the Brāhmo Samāj, but still he is not as much of a fool as the rest of its members. You know I have many self-

imposed religious duties and he never obstructs me about them. Why, he does not even ask me to put on my best clothes and sit in the sitting-room. You must make a vow not to go out walking. If your husband tries to force you to go out, lock yourself up in your room. When some one has given him a lesson some day or other, you'll see how he will praise you for your firmness. We are going now ; but don't you be afraid. It's a proverb that a husband is his wife's god and that it is his duty to guard her modesty. Shashthī, your husband, who should guard your modesty, is actually destroying it. I never could have imagined such a thing. I can dance or sing or do anything I'm told in our own room but that doesn't mean that I should do so in public. Shame on Shashthī, shame !

Women neighbours sing :—

At her words we feel ashamed.

Come, let us veil, let us depart in shame.

Ah ! *We* are zenana ladies of respectable families,
How can we forget our religion and our modesty ?

We are to walk gaily-dressed in the Maidān ;
What wind has struck her husband ?

From what branded blackguard has he learnt
this new fashion ?

(Exit all but Nīradā.)

Nīradā—Ah! now I am free from all blame. If any one chaffs me about my going out, I'll say my husband threatened suicide if I did not go with him, and that I dared not refuse him. But I have never been cut walking and I am really rather afraid. Still, there will be others there too, and I will remain quite close to him. I have often heard that Englishmen are real gentlemen and do not accost strange ladies. What fun it will be! I will hear the band play; I'll see the electric light. Once I have gained courage, I will always go out with him—I'll go everyday.

(Enter emancipated ladies.)

(Recitative)

For the good of our country, we have come to
lead you,

Feel no shame at the censure of the few.

We'll break the zenana system, don't you know
that ?

Don't believe, comrade, in our old worn out religion.

Your husband has ordered it, then come, oh joyful sister.

No longer keep up the old custom of *parda*.

Come, play-mates, let us go and deliver India,

Why fear? your husband is the head of the League.

See, my chums, what power we boys have now,
Our "high" "education" will enlighten the
"nation."

Benī—Well, brother, that brat Śetlā is too babyish.
You know Ghanas'yām ? Yesterday he wanted
to leave school early, but old Jnānā refused
him leave without a note from home, and the
ass Śetlā shut up at once.

Ghana.—Just wait, Benī ; when he comes into
the "play-ground" this afternoon, I'll strike his
name off our "club." But if he stands us a
treat all round, then I'll let him join again.
If not, not.

Chandra—Oh ! you expect him to stand us a
treat ? The poop gets only two pice a day
for his lunch. Besides he owes Hari the tobac-
conist six annas for cigarettes¹ and he can't
pay even that.

Benī—Do you think *we* can manage on our tiffin-
allowance, sweet one ? As soon as my father
comes back from office and goes off to wash
his hands, I run my hands through the pockets
of his coat.

Krishna—I too, my dear chap, have great fun.
My mother knows I am a good boy : she's the
fullest confidence in me. When she is busy,

1. *Lit.* Bird's-eye.

she hands, the keys of the cash-box to me and so I too manage to nail something. When Mother finds her cash short, she gets excited and I cry out; and so she thinks that her little Keshtā has not taken it, and her suspicions go elsewhere.

BenI—I keep on telling that silly ass S'etlā to prig the key from under his mother's pillow and extract something from her box. But all the ass says is, "It is wicked to steal," and "We should not grieve our parents." The "stupid" is too much of a baby. He hasn't any of what they call "moral courage."

(Enter Govinda Bābu.)

Govinda—Halo, Ghanaśyām, my boy, it's nearly eleven and you are still on the road? Aren't you going to school?

Ghana.—Well, we are going—slowly.

Govinda—For shame! Go to school, go to school; your master will scold you if you are late.

Ghana.—Mind your own business—you go to your office. Why are you bothering us? You clerks are regular slaves and live in mortal terror of a scolding from your Head. *We* aren't like that. *We* don't care a fig for our master. If he worries us, we leave his school and go to

another. There is combination in *our* Form. Why, we would all combine to lie in wait and give the master a sound thrashing on his way home, and then transfer ourselves to Shashthī Bābu's school. In fact, Shashthī Bābu has promised us that he would put boys of "moral courage" like us into a higher class in his school, and that if I can bring ten pupils to his school, I shall be admitted "free."¹ Then, of course, I would still get the school-fee from my father and have lots of fun with it.

Govinda—Ghanaśyām! How *dare* you talk like that to me? You were born yesterday; I have taken you on my knee hundreds of times; even your father speaks to me respectfully.

Ghana.—Father was educated in Gaur Mohan Addy's old-fashioned school,² and then became a mere *sirkār* in an office. Has he any "spirit" left? You tell me to respect you, but who *are* you? Nowadays we don't fuss ourselves about our elders.

1. Bengali school-masters used to steal each other's pupils. Smart boys acted as touts and were paid by results. A certain well-known agitator, now a flourishing proprietor, made his school by this method. The new University regulations have killed this profession.

2. The Oriental Seminary—still existing. The translator's uncle was the Honorary Secretary. The translator is the Honorary Auditor.

Govinda—Stop, I'll tell your father about you this very day.

Krishna—Have you ever seen a pretty swan¹?
(*Makes his arm into a swan's neck.*)

Govinda—Get out with you, you son of a gardener! Your manners cannot deteriorate common boys like yourselves. Two years hence you will all be following your own common caste-trades; but these two other boys are gentlemen's sons and if once contaminated by you, they can never recover; and even if they mend their manners, they will have learnt nothing by which to earn their bread. If they have learnt nothing and have no manners, no one will associate with them.

Ghana.—Well, old boy, have you a match on you? You might let me have one; I will smoke a 'cigarette.'

Benī—Well, "master," I see you are going to office with your hand full of *pāns*. You might let us have one.

Govinda—You sons of dung-eaters! I'm older than your father and all the neighbours look upon me as somebody. I see your tongues are very loose. How awful—what sort of boys are produced nowadays! Well, well, *they* are not

1. *Bak* is really a paddy bird. This is equivalent to cocking a snook.

to blame; they are the result of the *education* they receive. The mark of pap is still on their mouths¹ and they are taught independence! This is their "idea" of independence—to disregard their parents who tell them to study, and the scoldings of their masters and the advice of their elders who tell them to behave themselves. In *their* vocabulary *combination* means "*conspiracy*;" "*moral courage*" means "*impertinence*;" "*independence*" means "*insubordination*."

Ghana.—(Making bird-noises with his lips) Wah! wah! you're talking beautifully. Speak, speak my pretty polly.²

Govinda—Silence, you rat; I'll twist your ears off. Here are these mercenary schools; they think of nothing but collecting fees. They let in boys on small fees which they increase from time to time. There are more holidays in the year than in the High Court. They have their pāṅkhā-fees, their bihishti-fees. Once a boy gets admitted to the school, there is no transferring him; for there are no old-fashioned, fixed text-

1. *Lit.*, mustard oil and garlic is still being rubbed on their heads. This is done to infants to prevent them catching cold.

2. This word is addressed to any bird when enticing it to whistle or sing.

books ; every master writes his own text-book ; what is more, caning has been abolished by the Education Department. Of course the old pian was bad to hang boys by the waist from a beam and beat them with nettles, but nowadays the boys won't be touched at all. Unless a boy is punished with a stroke or two, or by having his ears pulled, how he is to remember that a boy is only a boy ?

Benī—"Come along, you son of a bitch," will you "fight ?"

Ghana.—I say, Benī, "damn your eyes," hit him with your bat.

Govinda—I see you are determined to do it. English boys train their hands and eyes by playing cricket at school, so that when they grow up they can fire off guns in the battle-field, or kill tigers and other beasts. But *you* boys won't dare to do these things. Now that you are learning gymnastics and making yourselves strong by foot-ball, you *must* show your strength somewhere. As you are Bengali boys, you won't enter the Army and fight ; if you fight in the streets, there's the fear of the Police. You are eating your parents' bread, and you must of course show your strength by beating them in return and so relieve the activity of your muscles. What my neighbour Haralāl

said to me the other day had sense in it. He said, "If the University passes a resolution that every boy before examination must produce a certificate of having learnt gymnastics, then all I have to do is to go to the Registrar with a black-eye and say 'Look at this, my son is a good gymnast.'"

Chandra—Here, here, "go" to office, "go" to office ; if you're late, your master will cut your pay.

Govinda—If *my* son were like this, I would put my foot on his neck and break it.

Ghana.—Your son is the Captain of our Club !

Chandra—You'd better go to office now ; but recollect when you go to play chess to-night at Mukherjee's house, you will have to pass by the Tānti pond.

Govinda—You boys will turn into thieves and spend your days working the oil-press in jail. Now that you have not got to earn your living, you don't realise your position. When you *have* to earn your own bread, you will understand the difficulty. What else can I say ? Damnation to your teacher, to your education, and to that devil Shashthī Vatavyāl ! That black-guard, by hoisting the "flag of independence," is ruining these boys, ruining the sons of gentlefolk. They will end by starving—certainly they'll die of starvation

(*Exit.*)

All—Have you seen this swan, old boy, have you seen this swan ?

Chandra—Come, let us have a look in at school.
We must leave rather early to-day as Bankim¹
Bābu is in Calcutta, and we must get some
books out of him for our boys' library.

Ghana.—I don't listen to my father, so why should
I listen to Govin Banerjee's jaw.

Chandra—Let us forget our fathers' ways,
Then shall we become the "hope" of our country,
So has Shashthī Bābu distinctly said,
Wagging his chin and twisting his moustaches.

Ghana.—Each boy is the pillar of his home,
Our time passes pleasantly,
We have staggered our mother country.

Beni—*We* do not worship sticks and stones,
Let Durgā and Kālī "go to hell,"
Our fathers' beliefs are all a sham,
See, '*bhāi*,' the fruit of education.

Krishna—There are few to match us,
Our speech is sharp and cutting,
Real bad boys are we,
But great fun we're having.

(SONG)

Chorus—

Not a rap for our fathers do we "care,"
English "shirts" we wear, cricket "bats" we handle,

1. The great Bengali novelist

1. Love—Peace—Glory—Glory to Truth—etc. are cant phrases of the Brāhmo Samāj.

We'll pick up our skirts, with our floods of
words conquer India.

Learn from us the secret of the religion of love ;
there's not one of us unwilling to teach it.

Sajanī—Mrs. Chāki, my own beloved, Dayita-dalanī, see what a pleasant place this is. How fresh the grass is!

Dayita.—“Beautiful! Pure!” My darling, in this abode of “love,” why not let us play prisoners’ base?

Bāṅchhā.—O sister Dīyitadalanī ! Oh ! this place
is "full of love," "full of love !"

Kshamā.—(Aside to Bānchhārām) Really I wonder death doesn't ever take you! Coming here to the Maidān and wanting to do nothing but to shut and open doors. Take care, you black-guard, don't you go playing about the place.

(Enter Nadīrchānd holding by the arm his master
Kandarpa who is blind folded.)

Nadē—Wait, master, why so quick? Go slow, go slow. Take care, don't tread on the plants. There's the white constable standing by, he will come along and give you a tap with his truncheon.

Kandarpa—Hang your tap of the trunchcon ! I'm already ruined ! Come round and unbandage

my eyes. Do you see Sajani Bābu anywhere here?

Nadē—There're several Bābus, and there're some very beautiful women with them. You want me to unbandage your eyes? Then you'll look at them? But won't you catch fever?¹

Kandarpa—No, no; they're all enlightened Sisters. By looking at them, "pure love" will surge up in my heart. What chance will there be for any disorder of the mind?

Nadē—(*Unbandaging his eyes*) Look then, look well. Lord Gaurchandra knows your mind. To *my* eyes these ladies are more smartly dressed than the women of the streets.

Sajani—Welcome, Kandarpa Bābu, welcome! How have you come here? And how is it that you have come alone? Why, where's the "Sister" [*i. e.*, wife]?

Kandarpa—Alas, what can I say about the "Sister"? I am undone, I'm totally disgraced, I can no longer engage in the great work of Deliverance. I reasoned with my grandmother and made all arrangements for her remarriage and then the stupid woman in the middle of the night ran away to our native village and took my wife,

1. There is a play on the word *bikār* "corruption" previously mentioned, which the illiterate servant mistook for the word (*jwar*) *bikār*.

- Sister Subhadrā with her. Ah Sajani Bābu, ah brother Bānchhārām, ah all you my Sisters! no longer can I show my face before you. I'm quite ruined by that rascally woman, my grandmother. She it is who stands in the way of my becoming a Son of India ; who does not allow me to attain to the Abode of Peace! Ah, my brother Bānchhārām, let me lie here on my back,¹ and do you get sister Kshamāsundarī to trample me to death.

Kshamā.—Isn't this that scoundrel who wanted to have his grandmother remarried ? Lie down, you son of childless parents, lie down ; you need have no further regrets, I'll soon send you to the grave.

Sajani—Kandarpakānta, be grieved no longer. I know you have suffered a great deal of oppression.

Bānchhā.—Boo, hoo, (crying) oppression ! oppression !

Kshamā.—See here, the oilman's son is blubbering again. My clown of Chinsurah is always breaking into sobs like a baby in sleep.

Sajani—This oppression must be removed. One of our brothers will soon start for Eastern-

1. Kālī is represented standing on Siva, who is flat on his back.

Bengal. He will return after effecting the heroic rescue of his wife and his grandmother.

Bānchhā.—Peace, Peace, Peace.

Kshamā.—Ah ! you blackguard ! you're mentioning that woman "Peace" again ?

(*Enter from the side Shashthī Bābu and Nīradā.*)

Shashthī—Come along, come along ; you're putting your shawl over your head again. Don't you see it's spoiling your flowers ?

Nīradā—I beseech you, pray, let us go home : I'm really afraid. Don't you see how those English sailors are walking about there ?

Shashthī—My "darling !" you my "wife" and afraid of a common sailor ? Don't you know that with this arm of mine I'll deliver *India*, with *this* arm ? For shame ! for shame !

Nīradā—No, dear, I don't want to stay. Suppose a sailor were to lay hands on me !

Shashthī—What do you say ? Lay hands on *you* and that in *my* presence ? Don't you know that I'd smite him to the ground with a sword or else fell him by the force of my "speech ?"

Sajanī—"Welcome, welcome," welcome, Shashthī Bābu. I see you have brought the "Sister." What good luck ! What good luck ! Glory, glory, to India !

All—Glory, glory, to India !

Bānchhā.—Liberty, equality and fraternity—and
“love”—“love” !

Kshamā.—This man's “love” overflows every now
and then. I see he has plenty left in spite of
his age !

Shashthī—Nīradā is a little bashful.

Bānchhā —Bashful ! what offensive language !
what offensive language !

Sajanī—Come here, Mrs. Chāki, let me “introduce”
you. You must make this dear sister's shyness
disappear. Mrs. Dayitadalanī Chāki, this is
Mrs. Nīradāsundarī Bhyātābhyāl ; Mrs. Nīradā-
sundarī Bhyātābhyāl, this is Mrs. Dayitadalanī
Chāki.

Kshamā.—I wonder where these rotters get their
names from ! Chāki,¹ Belan,¹ Bhyātābhyāl, —
why, can't they have human names ?

Dayita.—Sister Nīradā, what are you shy about ?
If *we* are shy and backward, who will encourage
the grand work of the deliverance of India to
which our men are devoted ? Ah, don't you
know that India will *soon* be delivered now,
since we women have filled our hearts with love
and learnt to be independent and to show our-
selves in public ? Come, sister, let us run a

1. *Chāki*, mill and *belan*, rolling pin.

race—you can run I suppose?—a bottle of Rimmel's¹ best will be the prize.

Nīradā—No, sister, I have merely come out to walk ; besides I am not accustomed to running.

Sajanī—Sister, you *must* learn to run, you must run with all your might, run, run, only run ; there is no other way to deliver India except by running.*

Bānchhā.—Glory to Truth,² brother, glory to Truth². My darling, Sister Kshamāsundarī, often pursues me and then I run, and so I practise the means of delivering India. (*Weeps*³)

Kandarpa—That sort of deliverance I too can do well enough, by jumping like this.

(*Enter Titurām Thākur, an opium-smoker.*⁴)

Titu.—I've heard that in the afternoon he walks about here with ladies. Are you here, my dear fellow? Ho, Bat and Ball Bābu, are you here? Hic! here's a gentleman who has walked all the way to see you ; please answer. ^

1. *Lit.* *Kuntalin* oil for the hair. The word is an advertisement.

2. One of Brāhmo mottoes.

3. The Brāhmo Samāj people often weep.

4. The allusions in the following dialogue are to the Opium Commission.

Dayita.—Who's that man? Saja, Saja, "what a fright!" Ugly creature, ugly creature; tell him to go away or I'll faint.

Sajanī—Dayi, my "darling," don't be afraid, don't be afraid.

Titu.—Why, lady, why are you having a fit like that? Titurām Gāngulī is a "gentleman." Don't you know that I go to the houses of greater ladies than you? You'd be much astonished if you saw the respect with which I am treated at Firingi Kāmini's place. I'm not to be seen everywhere. We opium-smokers have royal temperaments and don't move about much¹. 'Nuncle' who runs our opium-den renewed his license and so he gave a picnic at Kālīghāt and brought me as far as this in the tram, and that's how I managed to get so far.

Sajanī—What you want? whom are you looking for?

Kshamā.—I think this fellow is an opium-smoker.

Titu.—Capital, capital; I see you're a very unappreciative person. You're offering gratuitous insults to the son of a gentleman. Well, pray tell me, is not Bat and Ball Bābu in your party?

Sajanī—Whom did you say?¹

1. Opium-smokers seldom stir abroad.

Titu.—Why, that Shashthī Kesta Bat-and-Ball,—a more sporting name I have never heard.

Sajanī—Oh! you are looking for Shashthī Krishna Vatavyāl?

Titu.—Yes, yes, whether you call it Bat and Ball or *bātabbal* [paralysis], it's all the same. Neither name is very beautiful. Didn't he come here to join your party?

Shashthī—(*Coming forward*) Who, who, do you say? Didn't some one take my name?

Titu.—Yes, my dear fellow, that sweet name, now told on the rosary. You're so down on us opium-smokers that we can't help taking your name now and then, even at the risk of our cooking-pots bursting. 'Nunky,' the head of our opium-den, urged me to come and see you: that's why I have come to see you again. Look here, listen to one request of mine; give up your idea of abolishing opium, otherwise liquor will ruin the country and millions of Hindus will get enlarged livers. Besides many quiet and harmless old people keep themselves alive by just taking a little opium; the abolition will be a vital injury to them.

Shashthī—So you've come to tease me again?—Go away, go away. Now don't make a noise; there're ladies here.

Titu.—Let their ladyships remain, it's not as if

you were not here too. I am not the *sole* male person—I don't suppose you count yourselves as the neuter gender in grammar.

All—How offensive! how offensive!

Titu.—Good God! they are of such a delicate temperament I see, that the word grammar cannot even be mentioned before them. Can we forget what we learnt in youth? If you become Lieutenant-Governors, I believe you'll even stop the taking of *Makaradhwaj*¹ and drive out that idol Madan Mohan from his temple in Bāghbāzār. There's a saying—"A son-in-law was asked if he would take pop-corn. He said, 'What! Corn that has sugar in it? Sugar comes in bullock carts, bullock carts squeak and so do musk-rats—am I a musk-rat? You insult me!'" I see you interpret things like this. All right; remain here as bodyguards to their ladyships; I am going. But if opium is abolished, may destruction fall on you.

(*Exit.*)

Sajanī—Dreadful, dreadful, when will low-class people like this disappear from this world?

Kshamā.—Why, what harm was he saying? Isn't taking a little opium better than drinking much and brawling? My father was cured

1. A well-known aphrodisiac for the old.

Shashthī—[In English] Now—Sir—don't interfere—with er—er—er—our ladies—

Kandarpa—Just so, sahib; go; please g-g-go elsewhere. We're en-en-enjoying the c-c-cool with our l-l-ladies; why do you c-c-come with your drunkenness here?

Sailor—"Hang your gibberish, you chatter-box; the ladies are mine." (*Rushes forward with raised fist.*)

Nīradā—Oh Heavens, what will happen to me!

Kshamā.—Dayi; run, run; this way, this way!

Men—Run, run! "Deliverance of India, deliverance of India!" (*They run up stage.*)

Sailor—Ha—ha, ha—ha (*obstructing Nīradā's way.*)

Shashthī—(*Peeping round the corner*) What's this? what's this? Come, oh Brothers, all help! he's caught my Nīradā.

Sajanī—We ought to help you, we ought to; brother Bānchhārām, help him, help him!

Bānchhā.—Of course, of course, "O sinful Englishman! come, I'll give you love, give you love, here come to me and receive boundless love."

Nīradā—Here, here, save me. Oh why did you bring me here? You said if a sahib or any person touched me, you'd kill him. Come here, take me home.

Sailor—"Deary, don't be silly."

Kandarpa—Hullo *sālā* ! you won't let her alone ?
 Shall I call a policeman ? I-i-is-t-t-that what
 you want ?

Nadē—O *kāstapīl*, *kāstapīl*,¹ here's a lady being
 murdered.

Sailor—“*Bhāgo* you *janglī* or else I'll dash out
 your brains.” (*Rushes forward with raised fist.*)

All—*Bāp re bāp re*, run, run ! (All run away.)

Nīradā—O *sahib* ! I kneel to you ; pray let me
 alone. I'm a Hindu lady, daughter of a
 gentleman. I didn't want to come here. My
 husband brought me by force. O *sahib*, let
 me alone. I'll never come here again. Oh !
 have you really run away and left me alone ?
 Is this your heroism ? You can't protect your
 wife against *one* *sahib* and yet you'll fight for
 the deliverance of India ! You other gentle-
 men ! have you *all* run away ?

Shashthī—(Looking in) *Sajanī Bābu*, help me
 all of you. Are we not sons of India ? A
 drunken sailor forcibly obstructs my wife, and
 we all of us² can't do anything ? *Bānchhārām*
Bābu, come on.

Bānchhā.—“Let us repent, let us repent².” There's
 no use in quarrelling. Inoffensiveness is the
 crown of all virtues. No one must act against

1. Constable.

2. Another cant phrase of the *Brāhmo Samāj*.

a sahib, otherwise the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals will interfere.

Shashthī—(*Distressfully*) "Please leave my wife alone."

Sailor—"Your wife ! you brute ; had she been your wife, you wouldn't have stood there making faces."

Nīradā—Help me, I entreat you all. O sisters, you are women, you've practised running and so you have run away from me. As I can't run, you leave me alone with this devil !

Kshamā.—You feeble creatures ! how many of you are there here ? Come on ; rush on him suddenly altogether ; knock the brute down ; put your knees on his chest and sit on him.

Bānchhā.—Sister, you'd better do it ; there's nothing *you* can't do.

Kshamā.—May you die, you oilman ! I'm but a woman and you want me to do your work, while you all stand with your tails between your legs hiding behind the trees !

Shashthī—Never will I tolerate such tyranny, never. I'll make an "agitation," I'll "convene" a "monster meeting" in the Town Hall, I'll "correspond" with all the newspapers, I'll appeal to Parliament,—let me see if I can't get my wife back.

Sajanī—Capital idea ! let us "form" a "committee"

at once and select a "delegate" to petition Parliament.

Bānchhā.—Write up the notices and I'll start now with the subscription list. From village to village, from city to city, I'll beg subscriptions to deliver the Sister.

Shashthī.—My darling, don't be nervous, have no fear. From tyranny such as yours, India will gain much good. If the subscriptions are numerous enough, I myself will be the "delegate" to London, I'll cause waves of agitation in Parliament; the world will learn what a hero is Shashthī Krishna. I'll have that black-guard sailor punished and degrade him in your sight—some day.

Sajanī.—Come, come, let us hold the meeting at once: Shashthī Bābu, *I'll* take the chair this time.

Kshamā.—O you rotters! the lady's actually in the clutches of an Englishman and you're talking of holding a meeting?

Sajanī.—Everything must be done according to regulations. We must do nothing in an "unparliamentary" manner. Come, come, all of you comè; "glory, glory to India!"

All.—Glory, glory to india!

Niradā.—How is that? Where are you going? You're leaving me alone? You talk of a meet-

ing when "my honour is at stake ; my caste is at stake ; my life is at stake ; my religion is at stake ? Oh ! oh ! who'll save me from this peril ? My own husband has run off and left me with this robber ! O Mother Durgā ! O Mother Kālī ! O Hari the Merciful ! Thou who prevented the shame of Draupadī, to-day protect the name of this innocent woman.

Sailor—*Tum kis wāste* afraid *ho*. *Ham tum ko* comfortably *rakhenge*. *Tumhārā sālā* husband *kutte ke murwāfiq bhāgtā hai*. *Ham* here ; *kyā* fear *hai*.

Niradā—O gods ! my husband taught me to dress, to sing, to play, to read love stories and love poetry, but he never taught me how to pray, and so, ye gods, I've never called on you. But do not, I beseech you, abandon me on this account. O merciful Hari, save me !

Bānchhā.—What idolatry, what idolatry ! (*Weeps.*)

(*Enter uncle Tinkari and Aśani.*)

Tinkari—What's this ! What a row ! I heard a woman's voice and I suspected that these abortions of ours were in some scrape. Is it you Shashthī ? Who's that lady ?

Shashthī—My wife.

Aśani—Thank God, uncle Tinkari, that we were walking near here.

Shashthī—Look, look, uncle Tinkari! Is it not you who ask me to abandon my efforts for the delivery of India? Look at that tyranny, to-day. Look at the daring of that wicked drunken sailor.

Tinkari—So I see. The girl is attacked by a blackguardly Englishman and you stand still doing nothing.

Aśani—Scott Thomson's dispensary is close by, you might have fetched some nitro-glycerine and squirted it at him. What are you doing?

Shashthī—WHAT AM I DOING? Don't think that I'm idle. I'm going to hold a meeting now; to deliver lectures; I'm going to petition Parliament. Don't you know we are *never* idle in these matters?

Kandarpa—I'll subscribe two rupees eight annas.

Kshamā.—Shut up, you son of a——. What a noise he makes!

Tinkari—Have yourself treated by a doctor, Shashthī, have yourself treated; for I see you *are* off your head. With your wife in the hands of a drunken man, you start to hold meetings and raise subscriptions to go to London and deliver her by lecturing Parliament? Ugh! ugh! You can't save your wife from insult, and you talk of female emancipation! I wonder why you don't get a rope and hang

yourself. Here's *one* common sailor and half a dozen of you men, and yet you dare not touch him? Suppose he *does* strike you once or twice; suppose even you die from the blows, yet aren't you going to deliver your own *wife*, who has none to turn to but you, who has none to help her but you, who has none to save her but you? Are you such a coward? Till you can place honour above life, don't dare to mention the word independence. Do you understand? Liberty, equality, fraternity and unity—these pass your lips but have no place in your souls. The wrongs of women, political freedom, national strength, welfare of your country—why, not a shadow even of these has fallen on your heart. What you do is a farce, mere cheap self-advertisement, another name for meanness and selfishness.

Shashthī—Uncle Tinkari, you've said enough, no more; don't put me to shame. All of them ran away and so I too ran with them. You are my real benefactor, come to my help. Although you follow the rites and customs of Hindus like our forefathers, still you are brave in the hour of peril. Save my Nīradā, save my honour; I'll be to you as a slave, I'll never do such things again.

Nīradā—Whoever you may be, I call you my

father ; look on me as your daughter. Save your daughter's honour, save her life.

Tinkari—(Speaking in English) Now Jack, leave the lady alone.

Sailor—(In English) Oh Jemini, go to the devil.

Tinkari—Curse your chattering ! I belong to Jāhānābād¹. You don't know me. I'll smash your head in two with one blow of this stick, you low drunkard.

Sailor—Stop, stop, what are you going to do, uncle Tinkari ?

Tinkari—Hullo ! who's this, who's he ?

Sailor—(*Removing wig*) I'm Phatikchānd Dev-śarmmana, Chakravarttī.

Tinkari—Phatik !

Nīradā—Brother !

Remainder—(*Coming valiantly forward*) What ! a Bengali ! Ah ! Ha !

Kandarpa—O *sālā*, why didn't you tell us before ? I'd have thrown a *chāḱā* at you.

Kshamā.—What's a *chāḱā*, you son of a — ?

Kandarpa—What you people call a brick. I'd have thrown that brick at him if I had known he was a *native*.

Bānchhā.—“Glory, glory to India !” Oh ! what a mistake, what a mistake ! (*Weeps.*)

1. *i. e.* I'm not one of the poor-spirited creatures of these parts.

Shashthī—Phatikchānd, you did very wrong.

Sajanī—You know that a man who appears in public in disguise, is punishable under the Penal Code? You did wrong in frightening us for nothing in this way.

Aśani—Really Phatik Bābu, you acted very “rashly.” You ought to know that the electricity of the nervous system gets out of order when one is suddenly frightened like this.

Phatik—Listen to me all of you. You call yourselves brethren; and I call Shashthī Bābu, *sālā*, therefore you are all my *sālās*. Seeing that you required a lesson, as you have far too much wind in your heads and must needs drag about your ladies in public in imitation of the sahibs, I determined to do what I had never done before and put on this filthy unclean dress. Make no more noise but go quietly home. Seeing this one *imitation* sahib you all put your tails between your legs, so just think what would have happened if there had been reality in the case. Now what do you say Bhyātā-bhyāl? Do you still desire female liberty?

Tinkari—Now disperse without noise. Whether you call Phatikchānd a jester or something of the sort or not, still just bear in mind that his trick has taught you a real lesson, *i.e.*, that you men must first learn self-reliance, learn

self-defence, and then think about making your women emancipated. A husband's chief duties are to maintain his wife, to love her, to look after her welfare in this world and the next. Try and carry out your obligations in a fitting manner.

Phatik—Well *sālā* Bhyātābhyāl ! did you hear? Your wife is my own sister, born from my own mother's womb; that's why I painted my face disguising myself as a British sailor. Some day I'll get a real sailor and bribe him with a little whisky to give you a lesson. Some of you may be decent and some not, but I warn the lot. So just look out.

(Song)

Women sing—

Shamed, shamed, shamed, we won't come out again.

We women of the Hindu race will preserve our

parda; a curse to Western civilisation.

Dear husband, do not dress us in English fashions,

Do not parade the lady of your house and so lead

to the ruin of your country.

A woman is like a jewelled necklace, guard her in

your own home,

Who ever scatters diamonds and pearls in the

market-place?

We will show as much coyness as you wish but
 préserve our self respect by respecting it.
Then we'll learn what attachment there can be
 between heart and heart.
We no longer want emancipation, we've learnt its
 taste in one day.

(*Curtain*)

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